

[Insert date], 2026

Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for Petitions 2023-28MPA and 2023-29MPA

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing to express my organization's strong support of the proposed Point Sal State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-28MPA) near the city of Guadalupe, and the proposed Mishopshno State Marine Conservation Area (Petition 2023-29MPA) off the coast of Carpinteria. Conserving these two special areas will help protect and restore ocean health, enhance coastal recreation experiences, and help ensure Santa Barbara County's coastal economy thrives for decades to come. I urge you to approve these proposals.

Both the proposed Point Sal and Mishopshno marine protected areas (MPAs) would conserve essential habitats that support rich biodiversity, such as kelp forests, rocky reefs, tidepools, sandy beaches, migratory whale corridors, a larval retention zone, and a seabird and sea lion rookery. Protecting these areas would have positive impacts that spread well beyond their boundaries, bolstering ocean resilience and keeping our coastal waters healthy. These two areas hold cultural significance for several Indigenous communities in our region. Designating this MPA would honor and strengthen Chumash stewardship of the area and celebrate their historical and present-day connection to the region.

These areas are treasured by coastal recreation communities. By making the ocean healthier and more resilient to climate change, strong marine protections help preserve everyone's ability to enjoy these areas through a variety of recreational activities, far into the future. Point Sal is home to stunning bluff trails frequented by local hikers and tourists to view wildlife, relax at the beach, and enjoy the remote, pristine area. Carpinteria is a popular area for surfers, divers, snorkelers, shore fishers, swimmers, kayakers, birdwatchers, and beach walkers.

Establishing these new MPAs also benefits our economy. California's ocean tourism and recreation sector contributes approximately \$24 billion annually to the state's economy and supports more than 340,000 jobs.¹ In 2023, coastal tourism brought just over \$2 billion in travel-related spending to Santa Barbara County, and supported more than 20,000 jobs.²

¹ NOAA Office for Coastal Management. 2024. *Marine Economy Report: California*. Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW) <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/marine-economy-california.pdf>

² Visit California, 2024. The Economic Impact of Travel in California.
<https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/research/economic-impact>

The Commission's continued work to protect California's biodiversity is critical. And ocean conservation is more important than ever, given escalating threats to our marine ecosystems. Thank you for the opportunity to express our strong support for these proposals that aim to bolster California's recreation and tourism sector, fill a current gap in network design to improve ecological connectivity throughout the region, boost resilience in the face of climate change, and protect critical marine habitats and ocean wildlife.

Sincerely,