



e
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE
finding the ways that work

Exhibit E2.d
Supplemental Public Comment
June 2001

June 11, 2001

RE: June Council Meeting, Agenda Item E.2

To the members of the Pacific Council,

For the last year we have followed the process in the Channel Islands to create a network of marine reserves. Along with other members of the conservation community, we have tried to work towards a solution that is both based in sound science and reflects the needs and desires of the community — a balance that the Council aims to find for each of its fisheries.

At this point, there is no firm proposal from the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary or the California Fish and Game Commission for a suite of marine reserves. However, despite the conclusion of the Marine Reserves Working Group process, there are other efforts underway to find a common ground solution for the area. NRDC, Environmental Defense and our members are concerned that the reserves be scientifically sound so that they have the best possible opportunity to protect biodiversity and habitat around the Islands. We will continue to pursue this goal until reserves are approved by the California Fish & Game Commission and NOAA. NRDC and Environmental Defense believe it is important to integrate activities surrounding marine reserves and other MPAs in the Pacific, including the Council's own investigations into the use of reserves to protect groundfish. The advice from Council committees and members will prove invaluable in the assessment of any reserve network proposed for the Islands. However, the goals of the Sanctuary program, and the State of California under the Marine Life Protection Act are substantively different from those of the Council. Under these statutes, ecosystem protection and biodiversity are the highest goals, including all species and their habitats, not solely the ones subject to active fisheries. While fisheries benefits can accrue from marine reserves — and we believe they will — the Sanctuary and California are responding to a much broader mandate, one of overall resource protection.

In considering the eventual recommendations of the Sanctuary and the Fish & Game Commission, I ask that you recognize the differing, but complementary, goals of those entities and the Council.

Thank you,

Kate Wing
Natural Resources Defense Council

Rod Fujita
Environmental Defense