

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 85

Introduced by Senators Kuehl, Migden, and Wiggins
(Coauthors: Assembly Members DeSaulnier, Feuer, Jones, and Saldana)

February 26, 2008

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 85—Relative to the Pacific bluefin tuna.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 85, as introduced, Kuehl. Pacific bluefin tuna.

This measure would seek the assistance of the Governor, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Ocean Protection Council in initiating, at the highest international level, the cessation of illegal, unreported, and unregulated bluefin tuna overfishing, the creation of marine protected areas, and the imposition and enforcement of catch limits for countries fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna in the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, The Pacific bluefin tuna is rapidly approaching
2 the fate of the collapsed Atlantic bluefin tuna population, which
3 has diminished by 90 percent in the Atlantic Ocean and in the
4 Mediterranean Sea, due to overfishing and the lack of effective
5 conservation and protection efforts; and
6 WHEREAS, The coastal economic losses for California as a
7 result of the diminishing bluefin tuna population in the Pacific
8 Ocean include decreased security of the pelagic (open ocean)
9 seafood market and fishing industry, decreased reliability and
10 productivity of coastal goods and services, and depletion of jobs
11 and income for those communities and stakeholders involved in
12 the pelagic seafood fishing industry; and

1 WHEREAS, The commercial catch of Pacific bluefin tuna for
2 California's coast from 1950 to 1998 averaged 11,434,390 pounds
3 per year; however, since 1999, the average catch has spiraled down
4 to an average of 294,544 pounds of tuna per year, a devastating
5 drop; and

6 WHEREAS, Overfishing of the Pacific bluefin tuna, sparked
7 by increasing demand by countries around the world, poses an
8 imminent threat to California's coastal economy that has created
9 a need for global solutions to preserve the population of the species
10 for California; and

11 WHEREAS, The crisis facing the Pacific bluefin tuna population
12 could portend future oceanic ecological losses because of the loss
13 of habitat and the inability of the ocean environment to recover
14 from a biological disruption of such significance that could
15 adversely affect the sustainability of current marine life; and

16 WHEREAS, Without the abundance of the Pacific bluefin tuna
17 serving as predators along California's coastline, an environment
18 is provided for the Humboldt squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) to invade
19 and devour marine life, thereby drastically altering the composition
20 and structure of the pelagic community for the coast of California;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Tuna swim in enormous schools, often numbering
23 in the thousands, that allow modern fishing nets to scoop up entire
24 schools of bluefin tuna, threatening the survival of the bluefin tuna
25 population and significantly facilitating overfishing of the bluefin
26 tuna; and

27 WHEREAS, The Pacific bluefin tuna is a slow growing,
28 endothermic fish that migrates thousands of miles across the open
29 ocean to feed and spawn; and

30 WHEREAS, The Pacific bluefin tuna is endangered by the
31 fishing fleets of nations that capture the tuna at their spawning
32 areas near Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines before they have a
33 chance to spawn, which further decimates the Pacific bluefin tuna
34 population; and

35 WHEREAS, The Pacific Fishery Management Council, which
36 manages fisheries that include highly migratory species, like tunas,
37 in the Exclusive Economic Zone, three to 200 miles off the coasts
38 of Washington, Oregon, and California, has difficulty enforcing
39 the federal Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and

1 Management Act and other laws that affect fisheries management
2 and which dictate catch limits of the Pacific bluefin tuna; and
3 WHEREAS, Research institutions that support and promote
4 bluefin tuna protection through governance stewardship include
5 the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Monterey Bay Aquarium
6 Research Institute of Science and Engineering, the Blue Oceans
7 Institute, the National Environmental Trust, the World Wildlife
8 Fund, the Tuna Research and Conservation Center, Hopkins Marine
9 Station of Stanford University, the Ocean Conservancy, the
10 California Coastal Commission, the National Oceanic and
11 Atmospheric Administration, the Natural Resources Defense
12 Council, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United
13 Nations, and the National Marine Fisheries Service; now, therefore,
14 be it

15 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
16 *thereof concurring,* That the state Legislature acknowledges the
17 devastation to the pelagic community off California's coast from
18 the mismanagement of the seriously imperiled Pacific bluefin tuna
19 species, and supports efforts to recover and preserve the population;
20 and be it further

21 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
22 this resolution to the Governor, the Department of Fish and Game,
23 and the Ocean Protection Council, to seek their assistance in
24 initiating, at the highest international level, the cessation of illegal,
25 unreported, and unregulated bluefin tuna overfishing, the creation
26 of marine protected areas, and the imposition and enforcement of
27 catch limits for countries fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna in the
28 Exclusive Economic Zone.