



GAVIN NEWSOM
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

October 26, 2016

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Mr. Herb Pollard, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

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Mr. Barry Thom
West Coast Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Bldg. 1
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

PFMC

Dear Chair Pollard and Mr. Thom:

I am writing to express my support for the protecting living seafloor project to ensure sustainable fisheries and healthy ocean ecosystems along the Southern California Bight – the area extending from Point Conception, California to the U.S./Mexico border. We have an opportunity to implement a precautionary management approach to a truly unique ocean habitat which will ensure that the Pacific Ocean off Southern California continues to be a global hotbed for marine wildlife by eliminating the threat of bottom trawling on the seafloor.

The deep sea is a vast unexplored territory and the complexity of undersea geology is lined with rocky reefs, faults, canyons, and underwater mountains throughout Southern California waters, which makes for a diverse seafloor unlike any other place off the U.S. west coast. Federal government advisors are aware of this unique global hotspot, and as Californians, we have an opportunity to work together secure habitat for a broad variety of sea life. This includes migratory large whales, nurseries for white shark pups, breeding habitat for California sea lions; and productive ocean ecosystems for biodiversity such as deep sea corals, octopus, and sponges that provide food and shelter for the economically robust commercial and sport fisheries in Southern California.

It is timely and crucial that we continue to develop new innovative ways to prepare, manage, and mitigate changing ocean conditions caused by climate change along our coastlines, and develop policy and programs to research issues such as ocean acidification and hypoxia. Protection of pristine deep sea habitat found in the Southern California Bight is essential for data collection and understanding California's greatest ally – the Pacific Ocean. Critically, these areas are threatened because of possible expansion of bottom trawling along the seafloor. If bottom trawling is stretched beyond its current small near shore areas, we run the risk of significant and long-term negative impacts to these ecosystems and biodiversity.



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We are in a position to continue to be at the forefront of protecting essential wildlife in our ocean ecosystems by implementing the precautionary management approach. We have the opportunity to set a precedent for the best possible way to protect these systems, while encouraging the discovery of even more species in the process. The ultimate goal is to designate all un-trawled areas south of Point Conception as an Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Area closed to bottom-trawling. This would eliminate the single greatest impact to seafloor habitats among all fishing gears in use off the West Coast.

Please stand together with me as we lead the advancement of sustainable protection of our precious marine wildlife and California's ocean heritage. I am excited at the opportunity to advance meaningful change to protect these species while ensuring sustainability of our fisheries, and I hope that you will join me in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom", written over a horizontal line.

Gavin Newsom
Lieutenant Governor