

**SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES PANEL
MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
299 FOAM STREET
MONTEREY, CA 93940**

November 24, 2008

Mr. Stephen Scheiblaue
Office of the Harbormaster
City Hall
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Steve,

This letter is in response to your letter dated November 21, 2008.

First, you are more than welcome to join the Research Activities Panel (RAP) at its next meeting (January 9, 2009, CSUMB), and we can set aside 10 minutes for you to address the RAP. However, please keep in mind that the RAP is a working group of the SAC and the RAP's objectives are, among other things, to provide advice to the sanctuary staff on conservation science issues that influence policy, and to review research issues and documents for the SAC and sanctuary staff. (See http://montereybay.noaa.gov/intro/advisory/rap_objectives.html for more details about the RAP's purpose, procedures and protocols.) The RAP does not undertake research or develop evaluations or opinions in response to individuals or entities outside the sanctuary staff or SAC. Requests such as yours, which would entail significant investment of time and effort on the part of RAP members and the RAP as a whole, should come through the sanctuary staff or SAC. You might consider having the commercial fishing seat bring this request before the SAC.

Having said that, I'd like to address your specific requests. You requested an opinion as to the need for any new, reconfigured or more restrictive marine protected areas within the federal waters of the sanctuary for currently unmet research needs. This need was identified by sanctuary management at the regional and national levels, articulated in memos dated 2/15/08 and 4/15/08 from Sanctuary Superintendent Paul Michel, and was based on input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders and experts, including the RAP. The RAP has been engaged in the issue of MPAs since the issue first arose during the Joint Management Plan review process. While the RAP as a whole did not play a formal role in advising the sanctuary, RAP members most familiar with the science of MPAs (Drs. Rick Starr and Mark Carr, and I) were members of the sanctuary's MPA working group. The RAP felt that since these members were the most knowledgeable about the science of MPAs of all the RAP members, the RAP could offer relatively little additional advice to the sanctuary. The RAP did review and comment twice on versions of the presentation I gave to the SAC on the scientific value of marine reserves in achieving ecosystem protection goals at

the December 2007 SAC meeting. The topic of MPAs has been on the RAP's agenda over 60 times since January 2001. The nature of this agenda item has ranged from simple updates of recent developments to focused discussion and sharing of differing opinions. At least two and often several sanctuary staff members, including the sanctuary's research coordinator Dr. Andrew DeVogelaere, are present at every RAP meeting. As a result, the sanctuary staff has benefitted from the range of opinions and the scientific discourse related to the role of MPAs in ecosystem protection generally and in the MBNMS in particular. The RAP has assumed that these discussions have guided the sanctuary's policy development related to MPAs. The sanctuary has made a decision to move forward with a process to propose MPAs in federal waters of the sanctuary, in part to address unmet research needs. In my opinion as RAP chair, it is not the RAP's role to question this decision. Our job now is support the scientific underpinnings of the process moving forward.

Your second question, related to the research opportunities provided by existing state MPAs, Davidson Seamount, Essential Fish Habitat areas and the Rockfish Conservation Area, is a good question and should be addressed in the sanctuary's process moving forward. As you know, the sanctuary is proposing to establish a stakeholders' working group and a science panel to inform and advise this process. I would certainly expect that the value and potential role of currently established MPAs in addressing unmet research needs would be on the Science Panel's agenda. While it isn't clear at this time how the RAP will engage in this process, suffice it to say the RAP is very interested in participating with the Science Panel and other entities associated with the sanctuary's MPA process. Asking the RAP to address these questions now would pre-empt the sanctuary's plans for a full, open and well-informed process.

Let me know if you'd like a 10-min. slot on the 1/9/09 RAP agenda.

Sincerely,

Chris Harrold, PhD
Chair, Sanctuary Advisory Council and Research Activities Panel
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Cc: Paul Michel, MBNMS
Chuck Della Sala, Mayor of Monterey
Monterey City Council
Don Hansen, PFMC