

**Media Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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**North Coast Government Agencies Protest Rush to Create Marine Reserves**

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On Monday July 20, 2009 the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District (District) forwarded a letter signed by three North Coast counties and numerous local governments to California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Mike Chrisman asking for a delay in implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). Although the entities signing on to the letter agree that additional steps to conserve coastal resources are desirable, none believe that the current MLPA Initiative process has sufficient data for decision support or the funds necessary for implementation.

The MLPA North Coast Study Region spans over 200 miles of coast line from the Oregon border to just north of Point Arena. Signatories on the letter include all three counties (Humboldt, Del Norte and Mendocino), five cities (Crescent City, Trinidad, Eureka, Fortuna and Point Arena), all harbor districts (Crescent City, Humboldt Bay, Noyo), the Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District and the Trinidad Rancheria. The letter was voted on and unanimously endorsed by boards representing each of these agencies. The letter, with authorized signatures, can be read at <http://humboldtbay.org/harbordistrict/protected-area-workgroup/>.

The MLPA Initiative process creates Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that ban all or most types of recreational and commercial fishing. Some areas, known as "Special Closures" even ban non-fishing boat, surfing and kayak traffic. North Coast governmental agencies all share concerns that economic impacts related to these potential closures will not be properly evaluated or considered. Those signing the letter requesting MLPA delay are also concerned about the membership of a Blue Ribbon Task Force that would evaluate North Coast MPA proposals and recommend their own option to the California Fish and Game Commission. This task force is not part of the original MLPA legislation, no members are from the North Coast region, and none have special knowledge or training that would give scientific weight to their opinion.

The same governmental agencies signing on to the letter will continue to participate in the Harbor District's North Coast Local-Interest Marine Protected Area Work Group. Additionally, due to the overwhelming response from these north coast local agencies, the District will be asking these agencies, and others, to consider a Memorandum of Agreement forming a "North Coast Local Agency Coastal Coordination Committee". The Coordination Committee would coordinate responses to regional issues including, but not limited to, the State of California's MLPA; climate change and sea level rise; regional coastal sediment management; coordination of ocean observing systems; ocean energy; and marine highways.

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