

Email Message, sent June 7, 2004

Dear Mr. Gregorio,

I am writing to lend my support to the proposed mitigated negative declaration and the proposed exception to the California Ocean Plan for Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO). I am the President and CEO of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) in Moss Landing, California. I also serve on the Science Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Ocean Policy and was formerly President of the American Geophysical Union, the largest professional organization serving ocean scientists. I concur with the findings that discharges of sea water by marine labs are generally benign to the coastal habitats and are more than offset by the high-quality research on these environments facilitated by the collocation of the laboratories to these Areas of Special Biological Significance. Furthermore, SIO and many of its fellow research labs maintain seawater facilities at least in part to educate the public on marine organisms and habitats, as well as human impact on these e!

nvironments. If it were not for the good work by these marine labs to bring these issues to the public in the first place, it is questionable as to whether there would have been sufficient public support for the special biological designation.

My own institution, MBARI, conducts the vast majority of its research in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Our research is providing fundamental scientific understanding that has been critical to management decisions. We rely on a reasoned approach from the Sanctuary officials in permitting scientific activities (e.g., "disturbing the sea bed" to collect cores to monitor the effect of DDT run-off from the Salinas farmlands on the health of benthic infauna) that might otherwise be prohibited (e.g., "disturbing the sea bed" to drill for oil).

It is definitely in the best interests of the oceans and of the public to allow marine labs to continue the limited discharges of seawater that allow them to conduct frontier research and educate the public. I encourage the Water Resources Control Board to accept the recommendations in the proposed plan. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely yours,

Marcia McNutt

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