

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

June 26, 2014

Maria Brown  
Sanctuary Superintendent  
Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary  
991 Marine Drive  
The Presidio  
San Francisco, CA 94129

Dan Howard  
Sanctuary Superintendent  
Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary  
PO Box 159  
Olema, CA, 94950

Subject: USEPA Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for  
Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries Expansion  
(CEQ # 20140105)

Dear Ms. Brown and Mr. Howard:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the above referenced project. Our review is provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The Proposed Project would expand the boundaries of the Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries (Sanctuaries) such that they would stretch from the current southern border south of the Farallon Islands to an area just north of Point Arena, as well as west of the current boundaries out to the continental shelf. Also associated with the Project are a number of key changes to regulations and permissible actions within the Sanctuaries. EPA supports the goals of this project and the added protections and benefits that sanctuary expansion would provide to water quality and the marine environment. In particular, EPA appreciates the Sanctuaries' willingness to consider the concerns we raised during the scoping process for this project and the forthcoming Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary expansion project. We once again thank NOAA for meeting with us on May 7, 2013 at our San Francisco office to discuss these projects.

Of greatest concern at the time of our meeting was the potential for the sanctuary expansions to produce a scenario in which large oceangoing vessels (not including cruise ships), prohibited from discharging treated sewage in the Sanctuaries, might, instead, discharge more frequently

within San Francisco Bay and the Bay Delta. Such a scenario would be inconsistent with the intent of the 2012 California No Discharge Zone Rule (CA NDZ Rule) and, potentially, result in water quality degradation of the vulnerable shallower waters of the Bay and Delta. We appreciate that the proposed action was subsequently modified to include regulation changes allowing for the discharge of appropriately treated sewage and grey water into the Sanctuaries for vessels of certain sizes with certain water treatment capabilities. EPA finds that this modification adequately mitigates the risk of increased treated vessel sewage discharges into the CA NDZ. We thank the Sanctuaries for this project modification, and encourage the Sanctuaries to continue to consider the effects of sanctuary expansion upon the CA NDZ and the water quality of the San Francisco Bay Estuary as you finalize the EIS.

Based on our review, we have rated the Proposed Project (the preferred alternative), the “Arena Cove Boundary” Alternative and the “Alternative MPWC Zones” Alternative as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed “Summary of Rating Definitions”), and we encourage the Sanctuaries to select one of these alternatives. We have rated the “Existing Regulations” project alternative as Environmental Concerns (EC) because it does not include the exemption for treated sewage discharges and, therefore, has the potential to negatively affect water quality in the manner previously described.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the Final EIS is released for public review, please send one hard copy and one CD to the address above (mail code: ENF-4-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521 or Carter Jessop, the lead reviewer for this project, at 415-972-3815 or [jessop.carter@epa.gov](mailto:jessop.carter@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager  
Environmental Review Office

Enclosure: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions