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Assembly California Legislature



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February 26, 2020

Douglas Bosco
State California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th floor
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Goleta Kelp Reef Restoration Project Grant Application

Dear Mr. Bosco,

I am writing in support of the Fish Reef Project application for a California State Coastal Conservancy grant. The “**Goleta Kelp Reef Restoration Project**” is designed to provide essential fish habitat and substrate for kelp, abalone, and other marine invertebrates. This project will create a productive rock-reef habitat in a degraded sandy bottom area just offshore of Goleta.

According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 93% of California’s kelp forests have declined or died in the past five years. In 2013, a mysterious wasting disease deeply impacted sea star populations that would otherwise predate on and temper sea urchin populations resulting in unmoderated, increased urchin consumption of kelp. Also, in 2014, a large patch of warm water developed off the California coast and persistent warmer sea temperatures have stressed the kelp forests to the point that growth and reproduction have slowed dramatically and caused further damage to remaining fronds and tissue. These negative effects reach from the ocean to the shore. Red abalone have been severely impacted by the loss of kelp and this lack of food, causing the abalone fishery to close.

Globally, the ocean and kelp forests absorb roughly one third of the total carbon dioxide (CO²) emitted by human activities every single year. In order to adapt to the challenges presented by climate change and sea-level rise, we must work cooperatively and in partnership with all agencies to restore this vital natural resource and monitor these changes over time. The University of California, Santa Barbara has expressed their support and this project can provide local research opportunities investigating the creation and management of offshore reefs, and how they interact with the natural ecosystem in coordination with the monitoring for the adjacent Campus Point State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA).

This project proposes to create a rocky-reef habitat offshore on submerged lands located at the Goleta County Park in Santa Barbara County. Dams, upper watershed development and roadways have choked off the natural debris flow and any new rock that would have migrated to the ocean has been diverted, depleting the ocean of the natural reef. The project is located in a degraded offshore site that was used as a dumping ground after the Montecito mudslides in 2018. The project will place up to 300 tons of quarried rock from Catalina Island and 75 sea cave reef units placed on 2 acres of mud and sand offshore.

I respectfully request your full and fair consideration of the Goleta Kelp Reef Restoration Project that will help to restore a healthy kelp ecosystem and make our region better prepared for climate change and sea level rise. Should you have any questions, you may contact Michelle Sevilla in my Santa Barbara office at 805-564-1649.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Monique Limón'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Monique' being larger and more prominent than the last name 'Limón'.

MONIQUE LIMÓN
Assemblymember, 37th District