

## MPAs - What Can Fishermen Do? - PART II: THE BUDGET

*"When I feel the heat, I see the light."* (Everett Dirksen, former U.S. Senate Republican leader, 1960's.)

**Situation:** The State is rushing to create MPAs throughout California which could include in excess of 20% of the State's oceans.

**Background:** MPA advocates say that MPAs will protect the ocean from activities threatening its survival. Yet the only outcome is rigid new fishing restrictions stacked on top of pre-existing restrictions - large areas where all fishing is prohibited.

Extensive management leading to adaptive management is required by law. But the State doesn't have the money needed for management so fishing restrictions are locked in place. Private money is paying for creating MPAs but not for adaptive management. The Administration promises that private funds will be found for future management. The Governor, Legislature, Department of Fish & Game (DFG), nor conservation groups can require private funders to pay in the future.

A 2005 report estimated the full cost of MPAs would be \$30-60 million. A 2006 study estimated the cost range from \$9-43 million. The DFG recently estimated costs at \$35-55 million annually when MPAs are fully implemented.

The budget funding measures were rejected by voters, creating a \$24+ billion State budget shortfall to be made up mostly with cuts. The Governor recognized that "we went in the wrong direction. Now let's go in the right direction. Let's do what the people want...Go out and make those cuts and live within (our) means."

Will he be willing to "live within our means" and postpone new unfunded programs? Or will he insist the Fish & Game Commission adopt unfunded MPAs? The Legislature's budget analyst recommends cutting \$4.8m funding for MPAs which will save \$35-55m annually in the future.

**Action:** **(1) Write to your State legislators.** Tell them, placing new unfunded mandates on DFG in the current budget crisis is **unacceptable**. Send a copy of your letter to the co-chairs of the Legislature's Budget Conference Committee:

The Honorable Noreen Evans  
Budget Conference Committee  
California Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Denise Ducheny  
Budget Conference Committee  
California Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5035  
Sacramento, CA 95814

You can find your State Senator and Assemblymember and their addresses at [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov) – click "Your Legislature" and insert your zip code. *See the sample letter on the back and please send your letter soon.*

**(2) Make a contribution.** We need funds to prepare messages to the media, organize local action, coordinate communication campaigns, and assemble presentations and documents. Even a small amount like \$25 will really help. The California Fisheries Coalition is working for all recreational anglers and commercial fishermen to make sure your voice is heard. Please make a secure PayPal contribution at: [www.cafisheriescoalition.org](http://www.cafisheriescoalition.org).

Tips for writing letters:

1. Short and to the point – focus on 2 – 3 points, avoid long lecturing type letters.
2. Make it personal – include comments about yourself, work, and community activities.
3. Don't blame the legislator for this situation; ask for his or her help.
4. Avoid confrontational type words, show respect even if that is hard to do.
5. Written letter is better than email and type your letter if at all possible.
6. Say thank you!

#### SAMPLE LETTER TO LEGISLATORS

The Honorable XXXX XXXXX  
California Senate/Assembly  
XXXX XXXXXX Street  
XXXXXXXX, California XXXXX

Dear Senator/Assemblymember XXXXXX (last name):

I am a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ and have lived in this community more than XX years. I am an active member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Fishing Club and my family and I enjoy ocean fishing. We fish to share fun times together, as well as to enjoy fresh seafood. I expect someday to teach my grandchildren the rewards of spending a day outdoors on the ocean.

You may already know that the State is working to create Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the ocean throughout California. Many of these areas, which might include up to 20% of the ocean, could prohibit all fishing, even though fishing is already heavily restricted.

The law requires active management and monitoring of MPAs to make changes if benefits do not materialize or if costs are too high (i.e., adaptive management is required). The most recent of three cost estimates says the cost will be \$35-55 million annually. However, the State does not have the money to manage MPAs. Once fishing restrictions are in place they will remain in place whether they are working or not - impacting thousands of small local businesses and tens of thousands of jobs.

Common sense and smart government says that pending decisions generating millions in unfunded future costs should not be made when other important existing programs are facing serious cuts. The Administration says trust us, private money will be found.

I support the Legislative Analyst recommendation to suspend \$4.8m for MLPA to save \$35-55m annually in the future. Please ask the Budget Conference Committee to require unfunded new programs be postponed. To do otherwise will just stop my family's recreation [or small fishing business] and harm the hundreds of small businesses that benefit from local fishing.

The Governor says we need to live within our means. Does he mean it?

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,