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September 9, 2009

Mike Chrisman, Chair
Members of the California Ocean Protection Council
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Delegation of Authority to Council Secretary to Disburse Funds to Help Plan and Implement the Marine Life Protection Act, Agenda Item #8

Dear Secretary Chrisman and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

Please accept the following letter of support from Ocean Conservancy regarding item #8 on your September 17, 2009 meeting agenda.

As you know, California is leading the nation with its landmark ocean conservation efforts under the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). Under an innovative public private partnership, the California Department of Fish and Game and the MLPA Initiative have developed a science-based, stakeholder-driven marine protected area planning effort unprecedented in state history. This effort has already resulted in successful adoption of fifty new marine protected areas between Point Conception and Point Arena covering approximately 20% of state waters in this region and providing improved protection to ocean wildlife and marine ecosystems.

With many important state programs at risk due to the state's dire financial situation, we were pleased that the Governor and Legislature expressed their continued support for the MLPA in the state budget process by identifying Proposition 84 monies as a funding mechanism to allow implementation of the MLPA to continue in spite of limited general funds available to the Department of Fish and Game.

The Ocean Protection Council has been a critical partner in implementation of the MLPA to date. Through your Council's leadership, Proposition 84 dollars have been invested in mapping, baseline monitoring, and other vital aspects of the MLPA. We urge the Ocean Protection Council to support these past investments in California's growing network of marine protected areas and **authorize delegating to the Council Secretary the authority to approve and disburse up to \$4,400,000 to the**

California Department of Fish and Game to help plan and implement the Marine Life Protection Act. This funding will allow MLPA planning and implementation to remain on track and is critical to the long-term success of the MLPA and to California's legacy of ocean conservation.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaitilin Gaffney". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kaitilin Gaffney
Pacific Ecosystem Protection Program Director