



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Region  
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200  
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

JUL 21 2011

The Honorable John Laird  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Mr. Laird:

I am writing to express my support for the modernization of the California State Lands Commission's (CSLC) Geophysical Survey Permit Program (Program). Surveys permitted by the CSLC pursuant to this Program use low-energy (no more than two kilojoules) equipment, such as side scan sonar and magnetometers, on State sovereign lands, which extend from the shoreline out to three nautical miles offshore. These surveys are conducted to obtain critical data on a variety of ocean uses and resources including areas of essential fish habitat, maintenance and surveys of underwater structures (notably oil and gas pipelines and fiber-optic cables), near-shore sand erosion and deposition, seafloor changes, seafloor hazards and debris, and offshore cultural resources. Ultimately, this information contributes to efforts to protect and preserve California's nearshore and offshore environment.

The design and implementation of a modernized geophysical permit program would incorporate up-to-date research in bioacoustics related to marine species' vulnerability to underwater acoustics and ocean noise. Current studies are based on frequency and sound pressure levels and are the basis for survey standards used by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement in federal waters. The proposed low-energy equipment modeling and accompanying analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act will not only inform the permit program, but can also aid in related, future research on anthropogenic noise and its effects on marine life.

Recent devastating incidents in coastal and marine environments, from the Deepwater Horizon Gulf oil spill to the offshore Tōhoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami that ravaged Japan, underscore the serious and innumerable threats still faced by seaside communities and ocean ecosystems. There has been recent impetus to avert or lessen such disasters by systematic ocean management, using tools and policies such as marine spatial planning, the creation of marine protected areas, and similar initiatives. Better management, however, demands more extensive, high quality information of the state of the ocean's natural and man-made features, structures and processes. An improved permit process will minimize environmental impacts, both individual and cumulative, of geophysical surveys and ensure that permit requirements are clear and feasible, while



supporting research and protection of coastal and marine resources, a key area of interest for the Ocean Protection Council, federal and state agencies, and the survey industry. Developing a State permit program whose requirements align more easily with federal requirements and protocols will also make it simpler for surveyors to obtain all of the necessary approvals for work that crosses between state and federal waters.

Therefore, I recommend that the Ocean Protection Council approve funding for the modernization of the CSLC's Geophysical Survey Permit Program at the Council's August meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert S. Hoffman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and "H".

Robert S. Hoffman  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
for Habitat Conservation

# County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

Glenn S. Russell, Ph.D., Director  
Dianne Black, Director of Development Services  
Jeffrey S. Hunt, Director Long Range Planning



July 20, 2011

The Honorable John Laird  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Laird,

The Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department firmly supports the efforts of the California State Lands Commission (CSLC) to modernize its Geophysical Survey Permit Program. Let me first express the department's respect for the high level of professionalism and high-quality work of the CSLC staff, and particularly, Mr. Cy Oggins. The department works closely with CSLC staff on several programs and projects related to offshore oil and gas leasing, development, and abandonment.

Surveys permitted by the CSLC pursuant to this Program provide important and beneficial information to protect the environment, as explained in the CSLC grant proposal. Such benefits, however, must be balanced with potential unintended outcomes, such as adverse impacts to marine life. CSLC's desire to proactively address relatively recent information of such potential adverse effects is commendable, and merits the full support of the Ocean Protection Council.

Planning and Development asks the Council to provide the necessary grant for this effort and looks forward to ultimate improvements to the program that would result from the effort.

Sincerely,

Douglas K. Anthony  
Deputy Director  
Energy Division

cc: Cy Oggins, California State Lands Commission

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219  
VOICE AND TDD (415) 904-5200  
FAX (415) 904-5400



July 12, 2011

The Honorable John Laird  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: **Ocean Protection Council Grant – Modernizing the California State Lands Commission’s Low-Energy Geophysical Survey Permitting Program**

Dear Mr. Laird:

I am writing to express my strong support for the modernization of the California State Lands Commission’s (CSLC) Low-Energy Geophysical Survey Permit Program. Surveys permitted by the CSLC pursuant to this program use low-energy (no more than two kilojoules) equipment, such as side scan sonar and magnetometers, on state sovereign lands, which extend from the shoreline out to three nautical miles offshore. These surveys are conducted to obtain critical data on a variety of ocean uses and resources including areas of Essential Fish Habitat, underwater structures (notably oil and gas pipelines and fiber-optic cables), near-shore sand erosion and deposition, seafloor changes, seafloor hazards and debris, and offshore cultural resources. Ultimately, this information contributes to a wide variety of efforts to protect and preserve California’s offshore environment and the resources it supports.

The design, subject to public review and comment, and implementation of a modernized CSLC low-energy geophysical survey permit program would incorporate up-to-date research in bio-acoustic science related to marine species’ vulnerability to underwater noise from human sources. Recent studies based on frequency and sound pressure levels help form the basis for survey standards used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) in federal waters. The proposed review of current scientific literature on ocean acoustics combined with low-energy equipment modeling and accompanying analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will not only provide an opportunity to integrate the results and recommendations of the studies used by NMFS and BOEMRE with the CSLC permit program, but can also aid in related, future research on anthropogenic noise and its effects on marine life.

Chronic stressors from pollution, development, and extractive activities as well as recent devastating incidents in coastal and marine environments, from the Deepwater Horizon Gulf oil spill to the offshore Tōhoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami that struck Japan and California,

underscore the serious and innumerable threats faced by seaside communities and ocean ecosystems. There has been a recent impetus to avert or lessen the effects of such disasters by systematic ocean management, using tools and policies such as coordinated Ocean Observing Systems, Marine Spatial Planning, the creation of Marine Protected Areas, and similar initiatives. Better management, however, demands more extensive, high quality information on the state, presence, and location of the ocean's natural and man-made features, structures, resources and processes. An improved geophysical survey permit program will help minimize environmental impacts, both individual and cumulative, of low-energy surveys and ensure that permit requirements are clear and feasible, while supporting research and protection of coastal and marine resources, key areas of interest for both the Ocean Protection Council and the California Coastal Commission. Developing a CSLC low-energy geophysical survey permit program whose requirements align more easily with federal requirements and protocols will also make it simpler for surveyors to obtain all of the necessary approvals for work that crosses between state and federal waters.

I urge the Ocean Protection Council to approve funding for the modernization of the CSLC's Low-Energy Geophysical Survey Permit Program at its upcoming meeting in August.

Sincerely,



ALISON DETTMER

Deputy Director

c: Cy Oggins, CSLC, Chief of Environmental Planning and Management

July 20, 2011

The Hon. John Laird, Secretary  
California Resources Agency, and  
Chair, Ocean Protection Council  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: Support for California State Lands Commission Proposal for Modernizing the Low-Energy Geophysical Survey Permit Program**

Dear Mr. Laird.

The Joint Oil/Fisheries Committee of South Central California writes you today to express support for the California State Lands Commission (SLC) proposal to the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to "modernize...[the] low-energy geophysical permit program." As you know, the last environmental review for this permit process was performed in 1984, over two decades ago. Much has changed in the intervening years in both geophysical survey technology and environmental conditions in nearshore ocean waters. Thus, it is timely and appropriate for SLC to bring this permitting process into the 21st Century.

Our two respective industries worked both individually and together to participate/comment on the previous permit system, and it is likely we will do so again as the process unfolds. Offshore oil and gas industry activities often require pipeline or shallow seafloor inspections using the technology of low-energy seafloor imaging like sidescan sonar and magnetometers. The commercial fishing industry is likewise very interested in seafloor features to avoid damaging valuable fishing gear during the harvest process.

Modernizing the permit process itself may result in some efficiencies, particularly if the SLC permit process and Federal Bureau of Energy Management, Regulation & Enforcement (BOEMRE, formerly MMS) permit process are more closely harmonized as a result. The permit program may benefit further from a review of the advance notice process useful in minimizing inter-industry interactions at sea during such survey work.

We therefore urge the OPC to view the SLC proposal as an opportunity to better streamline and integrate ocean governance in California, a goal of all ocean users and management agencies alike. We believe OPC should fund this proposal as requested by SLC. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Director, Joint Oil/Fisheries Liaison Office  
[for]

David Rose, Chair, Offshore Oil/Gas Industry Caucus, Joint Oil/Fisheries Committee of South/Central California  
Steven Dunn, Chair, Commercial Fisheries Caucus, Joint Oil/Fisheries Committee of South/Central California



## University Corporation at Monterey Bay

100 Campus Center, Bldg 201 Suite 119, Seaside, CA 93955

July 18, 2011

The Honorable John Laird  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Laird,

I am writing to express my strong support for the modernization of the California State Lands Commission's (CSLC) Geophysical Survey Permit Program. Surveys permitted by the CSLC pursuant to this Program use low-energy (no more than two kilojoules) equipment, such as side scan sonar and magnetometers, on State sovereign lands, which extend from the shoreline out to three nautical miles offshore. These surveys are conducted to obtain critical data on a variety of ocean uses and resources including areas of Essential Fish Habitat, maintenance and surveys of underwater structures (notably oil and gas pipelines and fiber-optic cables), near-shore sand erosion and deposition, seafloor changes, seafloor hazards and debris, and offshore cultural resources. Ultimately, this information contributes to efforts to protect and preserve California's offshore environment.

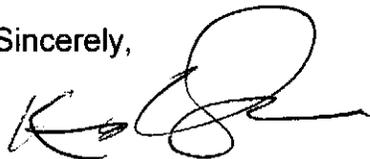
The design, subject to public review and comment, and implementation of a modernized geophysical permit program would incorporate up-to-date research in bioacoustic science related to marine species' vulnerability to underwater acoustics and ocean noise. Current studies are based on frequency and sound pressure levels and are the basis for survey standards used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) in federal waters. The proposed low-energy equipment modeling and accompanying analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will not only inform the permit program, but can also aid in related, future research on anthropogenic noise and its effects on marine life.

Recent devastating incidents in coastal and marine environments, from the Deepwater Horizon Gulf oil spill to the offshore Tōhoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami that ravaged Japan, underscore the serious and innumerable threats still faced by seaside communities and ocean ecosystems. There has been recent impetus to avert or lessen such disasters by systematic ocean management, using tools and policies such as Marine Spatial Planning, the creation of Marine Protected Areas, and similar initiatives. Better management, however, demands more extensive, high quality information of the state of the ocean's natural and man-made features, structures and processes. An improved permit process will minimize environmental impacts, both individual and cumulative, of geophysical surveys and ensure that permit requirements are clear and feasible, while supporting research and protection of coastal and marine resources, a key area of interest

for the Ocean Protection Council, federal and state agencies, and the survey industry. Developing a State permit program whose requirements align more easily with federal requirements and protocols will also make it simpler for surveyors to obtain all of the necessary approvals for work that crosses between state and federal waters.

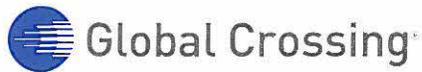
I urge the Ocean Protection Council to approve funding for the modernization of the CSLC's Geophysical Survey Permit Program at the Council's August meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Saunders', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin R. Saunders  
Executive Director, University Corporation  
California State University, Monterey Bay

cc: Cy R. Oggins, California State Lands Commission



July 25, 2011

The Honorable John Laird  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Laird,

I am writing to express my strong support for the modernization of the California State Lands Commission's (CSLC) Geophysical Survey Permit Program. Surveys permitted by the CSLC pursuant to this Program use low-energy (no more than two kilojoules) equipment, such as side scan sonar and magnetometers, on State sovereign lands, which extend from the shoreline out to three nautical miles offshore. These surveys are conducted to obtain critical data on a variety of ocean uses and resources including areas of Essential Fish Habitat, maintenance and surveys of underwater structures (notably oil and gas pipelines and fiber-optic cables), near-shore sand erosion and deposition, seafloor changes, seafloor hazards and debris, and offshore cultural resources. Ultimately, this information contributes to efforts to protect and preserve California's offshore environment.

The design, subject to public review and comment, and implementation of a modernized geophysical permit program would incorporate up-to-date research in bioacoustic science related to marine species' vulnerability to underwater acoustics and ocean noise. Current studies are based on frequency and sound pressure levels and are the basis for survey standards used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) in federal waters. The proposed low-energy equipment modeling and accompanying analysis pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will not only inform the permit program, but can also aid in related, future research on anthropogenic noise and its effects on marine life.

Recent devastating incidents in coastal and marine environments, from the Deepwater Horizon Gulf oil spill to the offshore Tōhoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami that ravaged Japan, underscore the serious and innumerable threats still faced by seaside communities and ocean ecosystems. There has been recent impetus to avert or lessen such disasters by systematic ocean management, using tools and policies such as Marine Spatial Planning, the creation of Marine Protected Areas, and similar initiatives. Better management, however, demands more extensive, high quality information of the state of the ocean's natural and man-made features, structures and processes. An improved permit process will minimize environmental impacts,

The Honorable John Laird  
July 25, 2011  
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both individual and cumulative, of geophysical surveys and ensure that permit requirements are clear and feasible, while supporting research and protection of coastal and marine resources, a key area of interest for the Ocean Protection Council, federal and state agencies, and the survey industry. Developing a State permit program whose requirements align more easily with federal requirements and protocols will also make it simpler for surveyors to obtain all of the necessary approvals for work that crosses between state and federal waters.

I urge the Ocean Protection Council to approve funding for the modernization of the CSLC's Geophysical Survey Permit Program at the Council's August meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Kouroupas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Paul Kouroupas  
Vice President Regulatory Affairs

PK:ms

cc: Cy R. Oggins, California State Lands Commission



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT, REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Pacific OCS Region  
770 Paseo Camarillo, 2nd Floor  
Camarillo, California 93010-6064

August 5, 2011

The Honorable John Laird  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Ocean Protection Council Grant- Modernizing the California State Lands  
Commission's Low-Energy Geophysical Survey Permitting Program

Dear Mr. Laird:

I am writing to express my support for the modernization of the California State Lands Commission's (CSLC) Low-Energy Geophysical Survey Permit Program. Surveys permitted by the CSLC pursuant to this program use low-energy (no more than two kilojoules) equipment, such as side scan sonar and magnetometers, on state sovereign lands, which extend from shore out three miles to the state/federal offshore boundary. These surveys are conducted to obtain data on a variety of ocean uses and resources including areas of Essential Fish Habitat, underwater structures such as oil and gas pipelines or fiber-optic and power cables, near-shore sand erosion and deposition, seafloor character, seafloor hazards and debris and offshore cultural resources.

The CSLC is seeking funding from the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) to update a programmatic document prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that underlies the requirements of its offshore Geophysical Permit Program. The design, subject to public review and comment, and implementation of a modernized CSLC low-energy geophysical survey permit program would incorporate up-to-date research in bioacoustic science related to marine species' vulnerability to underwater noise from human sources. Recent studies based on frequency and sound pressure levels help form the basis for survey standards used by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) in federal waters.

The CSLC's proposed review of current scientific literature on ocean acoustics combined with low-energy equipment modeling and accompanying analysis pursuant to CEQA will not only provide an opportunity to integrate the results and recommendations of the studies used by NMFS and BOEMRE with the CSLC permit program, but could also aid in related, future research on anthropogenic noise and its effects on marine life.

An improved process will help to ensure that requirements for CSLC low-energy geophysical surveys permits are clear and feasible, while supporting research and protection of coastal and marine resources, a key area of interest for the California OPC, federal and state agencies, and the survey industry. Developing a CSLC low-energy geophysical survey permit program whose requirements align more easily with federal requirements and protocols will also make it simpler for applicants to obtain the necessary approvals for work that crosses between state and federal waters.

The BOEMRE recommends the California OPC approve funding for the modernization of the CSLC's Geophysical Survey Permit Program at the Council's August meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynnette H. Vasco" with the word "for" written below the name.

Ellen G. Aronson  
Regional Director

cc: Cy R. Oggins  
Chief, Division of Environmental Planning and Management  
California State Lands Commission  
100 Howe Ave., Suite 100-South  
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202