April 2, 2026

*Submitted electronically to fgc@fgc.ca.gov.*

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

**Re:** *04/15/26 Fish and Game Commission Meeting Agenda Item 2: Bin 2 MPA Petitions*

Dear President Sklar and Honorable Commissioners and Staff,

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is a national member-trade organization of the recreational angling sector r*epresenting over 80 California member businesses and organizations* including mom-and-pop bait and tackle stores, recreational charter fleets and captains, conservation nonprofits, fishing guides, media houses, major national retail stores, international brands, local marinas and landings, and many others. In California, the recreational angling sector contributes upwards of $7.9 billion annually to the state's overall economy, *generates a total of $672 million in state and local taxes*, and supports over 43,000 jobs.

**Together, we are writing to express our strong support for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) recommendations to deny the ten non-tribal bin 2 Marine Protected Area petitions.** We appreciate the Department's thoughtful, science-based, policy-grounded and comprehensive analysis and encourage the Commission to adopt these recommendations.

Our community's economic impact, its role in advancing social equity and outdoor access to California's ocean and lakes, and the cultural and familial heritage of recreational fishing are deeply woven into the fabric of the state's natural resource policy decision-making. In addition to the strong conservation ethic demonstrated by individual anglers and our multi-billion dollar contribution to the state's economy, the recreational fishing sector also directly supports the budgets of the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This occurs through state fishing license fees - approximately $80 million annually - as well as a self-imposed federal excise tax on fishing equipment and tackle, which is distributed through the Federal Sport Fish Restoration Act (SFRA) and contributes roughly $20 million annually to California. *We respectfully ask that the Commission consider these contributions and this broader context as it evaluates our comments.*

ASA believes CDFW's review appropriately applied the guidance provided by the Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas, considered the historical context of the MLPA process, and relied

on the best available science and policy. As outlined by the Department, the non-tribal bin 2 petitions do not present new or compelling scientific information and are frequently inconsistent with the goals and design of the existing MPA network. Perhaps most importantly, CDFW evaluated that the non-tribal bin 2 petitions fail to demonstrate the proposed changes would improve conservation or biodiversity outcomes. Because the existing network was developed through an extensive, science based, and stakeholder driven process - we agree with the Department that any proposed modifications should meet a similarly high standard.

While mindful of the limitations of MPAs when applied as a fisheries management tool, ASA's California members recognize the important role Marine Protected Areas play within a comprehensive and durable conservation strategy. We support the continued implementation and stewardship of MPAs as part of a broader, science-based framework that prioritizes long-term ecosystem health. *At the same time, the best available science indicates that the primary drivers of biodiversity loss are factors such as habitat degradation, water quality, climate change, and other ecosystem stressors. Responsibly managed recreational fisheries contribute to healthy biodiversity and should be considered within this broader context.*

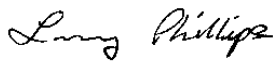
To that end, we emphasize the importance of California's and the United States' existing, world-class, fisheries management frameworks under the Magnuson-Stevens Act through the Pacific Fishery Management Council and under the Marine Life Management Act through CDFW. These processes provide transparent, inclusive, and science-based platforms for fisheries management that account for stock abundance as well as broader ecosystem impacts. It is our strong belief that these established systems remain the appropriate and effective venues for fisheries management decisions.

ASA, our California members, and the community of California anglers serve remain committed to working collaboratively with state and federal agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to address the issues impacting our coastal waters and communities, including stormwater runoff, untreated sewage, plastics, harmful algal blooms, predation, invasive species, and changing ocean conditions. In this regard, we hope the durability provisions within the state's 30x30 framework offer a valuable opportunity to better align stakeholder efforts and direct resources toward addressing these impacts, including those affecting existing MLPA MPAs.

The recreational fishing community, as long-term stewards and significant contributors to California's economy, have a direct and enduring interest in the health of the state's marine ecosystems and remain committed to advancing solutions grounded in science and collaboration. **In summary, we are writing to e*xpress our strong support for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) recommendations* to deny the ten non-tribal bin 2 Marine Protected Area petitions and to *encourage the Commission to adopt these recommendations.***

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Larry Phillips
Pacific Fisheries Policy Director
American Sportfishing Association