

**Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
P O Box 1309, Carmel Valley, CA 93924 (831) 659-2838**

Application to

Central California Joint Cable/Fisheries Liaison Committee
Commercial Fishing Industry Improvement Fund
ATTN: Grant committee
P.O. Box 2033
Morro Bay CA 93443

Project Title

Amend the National Marine Sanctuary Act

Amount Requested

\$21,000

Matching Funds and/or In-Kind Service

The Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries (ACSF) will also organize a Central California-based effort to advocate to Members of Congress for changes to the National Marine Sanctuary Act. This will be a substantial work effort. All but \$3,000 of the grant funds will go directly to the Washington D.C. firm of E. Del Smith & Co.

Statement of Indirect Cost

None

Project Supervisors

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Staff

None

Associations Involved

The lead organization will be the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries. Other agencies and organizations supporting this effort include Moss Landing, Monterey Harbor, and Pillar Point Commercial Fishermen's Associations. This list is growing, and may include Port Associations.

Project Description

The National Marine Sanctuary Act, which provides legislative authority for all of the United States' National Marine Sanctuaries, will soon be up for reauthorization by Congress. This law, as currently written, is overly broad, vague and problematic for the fishing and harbor communities, other ocean users, and the general public, who currently have little voice in Sanctuary decision making. Of particular concern to the fishing community are clarifications that should be made which would make it explicit that the Sanctuary Program will not have authority over fishing operations. We will propose that if the Sanctuary Program has concerns about fishing operations, they would be welcome to consult with industry, and work toward gaining consensus. If consensus is not reached, however, the Sanctuary Program would have no authority to take any further actions. If consensus is reached, the Sanctuary would be able to comment to the fishery agencies.

Currently, the Sanctuary Program empowers itself by language in the Act that speaks to its mandate for "protecting biodiversity" in habitats and to create a "balance within the ecosystem." Further, its

overarching mandate is to “protect” the resources of the Sanctuary. However, “protection” is never defined and in fact has been used in nearly limitless ways. There is no telling how the concept of protection will play out for fishermen and other ocean users in the future.

Changes to the National Marine Sanctuary Act will affect all four National Marine Sanctuaries off California: Channel Islands, Monterey Bay, Cordell Bank, and Gulf of the Farallones. Additionally, there are proposals to expand both the Channel Islands and Monterey Bay Sanctuaries. This is all the more reason the role (or non-role) of the Sanctuary Program in fisheries needs to be clarified.

It is the intention of the ACSF to actively work with the above-mentioned supporting organizations, and offer constructive amendments to the National Marine Sanctuary Act. Specific language changes would be developed through congressional staff. The Joint Cable/Fisheries Liaison Committee would be kept well informed as to the specific language changes proposed through this effort. It is anticipated that this effort will take approximately one year. Of our requested funds, \$21,000 will fund six months effort, which include anticipated travel costs to testify before Congress.

Who Will Benefit?

The two biggest beneficiaries of proposed changes will be the fishing community and the harbors, whether they be municipal or special districts. To that end, the Cable/Fisheries Liaison Committee will be only one source of funding for this effort. Funds will be solicited from the various harbors affected by Sanctuary regulation. Other outreaches, such as to the agriculture community, will be made, as the language regarding the protection of Sanctuary resources has far reaching implications for many types of users or neighbors to Sanctuary waters.

Beginning and Completion Dates

This work effort has already begun with suggested language changes. The completion date is unknown but would be represented by the passage of a reauthorized National Marine Sanctuary Act by Congress and signed by the President. This would be approximately twelve to sixteen months from now.