



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

July 6, 2006

Michael Murray
Management Plan Coordinator
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
113 Harbor Way, Suite 150
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, California (CEQ # 20060188)

Dear Mr. Murray:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

Based on our review, we have rated the DEIS as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed "Summary of Rating Definitions"). EPA supports the proposed new and modified regulations that will better enable the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) to address emerging resource management issues and ensure protection of its valuable resources. Towards this end, EPA recommends the selection of Alternative 1 which provides additional protections for water quality. These protections include prohibiting the discharge of treated sewage from larger vessels and the at-sea transfer of petroleum-based products, materials or other matter ("lightering") within CINMS. Alternative 1 would also reduce the risk of grounding and collision accidents in sensitive near-shore areas by reducing the allowable size of near-shore vessels. None of these additional prohibitions are expected to significantly impact current human uses in the CINMS.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the Final EIS is released for public review, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3988 or Karen Vitulano, the lead reviewer for this project, at 415-947-4178 or vitulano.karen@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Duane James, Manager
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

Enclosure: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions