

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #:

Project Title: Proposed Amendments to Commercial Groundfish regulations, Rescinding of Select Commercial Groundfish Management Measures, Title 14, Sections 150.06 & 150.16, California Code of Regulations

Lead Agency: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Project Location (City/County): California State Waters from the California/Oregon Border to 37° 07' N latitude (Año Nuevo).

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences):

Regulatory authority for the commercial groundfish fisheries is shared by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) and federal government, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the states of Oregon and Washington, and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) to manage West Coast and California groundfish recreational and commercial fisheries, on a sustainable basis. State regulations vary by species/groups and groundfish management area, and are designed to keep harvests within federally-established limits. One of the groundfish species, quillback rockfish (*Sebastes maliger*), has driven extensive management actions taken recently. Results of a 2021 quillback rockfish data-moderate stock assessment concluded that the population of quillback rockfish off California was in severe decline. The Department adopted emergency regulations that defined the 20-fathom boundary line, and established the commercial California Groundfish Restriction Area (CGRA) and put those in place long-term in early 2025.

On June 9, 2025, a draft stock assessment for quillback rockfish off California became available. This new, more robust assessment considered all available data sources, including newly available California-specific life history information, and did not rely on proxy data from other states as the 2021 data-moderate assessment had. The 2025 assessment results indicate that the California quillback stock is healthy and not overfished, a major reversal from the 2021 data-moderate stock assessment.

In response to the draft quillback rockfish stock assessment, the Department adopted emergency regulations which rescinded the CGRA and associated 20-fathom boundary line for commercial groundfish fisheries north of 37° 07' N latitude (Año Nuevo) put in place in early 2025 as a result of the 2021 stock assessment and became effective on August 21, 2025. The emergency rulemaking also extended federal trip limits for non-nearshore groundfish stocks into state waters north of 37° 07' N latitude.

For this Project, the Department proposes to amend commercial groundfish fishing regulations as set forth in Sections 150.06 and 150.16 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations through a certificate of compliance action to make permanent these emergency regulations currently in place, including:

1. rescind the CGRA and associated 20-fathom boundary line north of 37° 07' N latitude (Año Nuevo, San Mateo County); and,
2. extend federal trip limits for non-nearshore groundfish stocks into state waters.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

The initial study and the Commission's review of the project showed that the project will not have any significant or potentially significant effects on the environment, and that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the Department, that the Project may have significant effects on the environment. Therefore, no alternatives or mitigation measures are proposed to avoid or reduce any significant effects on the environment.

The project will not have a significant effect on aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

Therefore, a negative declaration is filed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Section 21080, subdivision (c).

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public: N/A

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife