Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
PO Box 3044
1400 Tenth Street, Rm 2
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Region
1700 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

Project Title: Study on Rockfish Opsins

Project Location: Nearshore waters of Santa Cruz and San Diego

Project Description: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to Cornell University pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2081(a) for educational purposes. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to take coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*) and steelhead trout (*O. mykiss)* during the course of sampling, subject to terms and conditions set forth in the permit. The purpose of this sampling is for the Cornell University's research study on rockfish opsins. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to potentially capture coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout during surveys. The applicant will conduct year-round research sampling of nearshore rockfish species using hook & line through December 31, 2029.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Peter Searle, Cornell University

Exempt Status:

☐ Ministerial;

☐ Declared Emergency;

☐ Emergency Project;

☒ Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Calif. Code Regs., § 15306, Information Collection, Class 6

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project involves research and permanent collection sampling within nearshore waters of Santa Cruz and San Diego which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to coho salmon, Chinook salmon, or steelhead trout which are all listed under the California Endangered Species Act.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Dylan Inskeep **Telephone:** (707) 317-3924

Signature: CLAIRE WAGGONER **Date:** **July 31, 2026**

Claire Waggoner, Habitat Conservation Program Manager, Marine Region

☐ Signed by Lead Agency Date Received for filing at OPR: _____