

Statement of Dave Danbom on the potential for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to regulate fishing

Dave Danbom is a retired Monterey Bay fisherman who led local fishermen in their original negotiations with NOAA representatives during the establishment of the MBNMS. His statement summarizes the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about the potential for MPAs in the Sanctuary:

Concerns from the fishing industry about a Federal program that would call the Central Coast a "Sanctuary", leading to possible new regulations of fishing by this agency, mobilized fishermen to work against and defeat Sanctuary designation in the mid 1980's. Then a proposal for a Monterey Sanctuary surfaced again in the early 90's. At this time, as a leader in local and state fisheries, and a member of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (holding the obligatory seat for the State of California) I was asked by our Congressional Representative to assist him in bringing the commercial and recreational fishermen together in support of the proposed Sanctuary. Early on, fishermen were clearly promised that the new Sanctuary would not regulate fishermen or fishing activities. If the Sanctuary had any concerns, they would work with us for a mutually acceptable solution. This promise was made both by elected officials, and also NOAA representatives. It was unequivocal: we wouldn't have to worry about this new agency. We would get benefits, like the ban on oil development, a water quality program, and enhanced and collaborative research with us for better knowledge on fish populations. These are all things fishermen value. Fishermen had had a positive working relationship with Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Manager Ed Uber. With the promise in place, we anticipated that we would have that kind of relationship with the new Sanctuary. Now, the reality is frustrating and disappointing. Fishermen perceive the Sanctuary as working to find ways to break this promise, especially over the MPA issue. Fishermen were deeply angered to see the MBNMS go on record as wanting a State MPA network that was even more extreme than what the State wanted, and which had zero support from the fishing community. Because of my deep involvement in bringing the fishing industry, elected officials and NOAA together in reaching the agreement that led to the creation of the MBNMS, I feel personally responsible for any adverse consequences now facing the fishing industry. If this Sanctuary breaks its promise made to fishermen by changing the Designation Document to regulate fishing, I will go to my grave regretting my support of the new Sanctuary, and regret my role in getting other fishermen to go along. (Dave Danbom, personal communication, October 2007)