

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 19, 2012

To: Harbor Commissioners

From: Scott Riedman, Waterfront Director

Subject: Harbor Operations Report

Parade of Lights Recap

Beneath starry skies on a mirror-flat ocean (and about four hours ahead of a potent winter storm), 28 boats participated in the 2011 Parade of Lights on December 11th. Decorated to the theme of “Candy Cane Holidays,” *Channel Cat* captured the grand prize. Following the parade, Bay Fireworks produced a memorable pyrotechnic show, as boaters filtered into the harbor, then headed to a lively awards ceremony at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. Owing to the popularity of this event, it’s never too early to mark your calendar for next year’s Parade of Lights set for December 9, 2012.

Marine Life Protection Act Closures Take Effect

Despite ongoing legal challenges, a significant amount of Southern California’s coastal fishing grounds became off limits on January 1, 2012, as mandated by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), a state law passed in 1999. The closures followed a two-year planning process involving dozens of interest groups and thousands of public comments. Despite the closures, a consortium of fishing interests continues its legal objection to MLPA implementation. They are asking courts to set aside MLPA regulations for the North Central and South Coast study regions, citing a lack of statutory authority for the Fish and Game Commission to adopt the regulations, and, in the case of the South Coast regulations, violations of the California Environmental Quality Act in the Commission’s environmental review of the regulations. Those legal challenges will likely be resolved by the end of 2012. Meanwhile, the closures remain in effect. For descriptions and maps of the MLPA closures go to http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/scmpas_list.asp. A map of the closures is also attached to this report.

Staff Begins Work on Fish Die-Off Response Plan

On occasion, due to algal blooms in the Santa Barbara Channel, the harbor has experienced minor to moderate “die off” events when schools of fish—primarily small baitfish—die for lack of oxygen and sink to the bottom. Last March, a significant die-off event occurred in King Harbor (Redondo Beach), during which 175 tons of dead sardines, piled 2’-3’ deep, clogged fairways and finger docks. Removing them required a week-long effort by City staff and over 700 volunteers. In December, our Waterfront

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Director and Harbor Operations Manager met with the City of Redondo's Fire Chief/Harbormaster to learn from their experience and begin the process of drafting a Fish Die-Off Response Plan for Santa Barbara Harbor. Waterfront staff subsequently met with our City's Emergency Services Manager to further discuss ideas for drafting this plan. Staff intends to work on the plan during the remainder of Fiscal Year 2012, including holding at least one public meeting in the harbor to discuss approaches to a large-scale fish die-off in Santa Barbara Harbor. At the conclusion of its research, staff will add a Fish Die-Off Response Plan to its manual of Emergency Response Plans that addresses events like earthquakes, coastal storms and oil spills.

Attachment: MLPA maps, Southern California

Prepared By: Mick Kronman, Harbor Operations Manager