

Notice of Intent to Adopt Negative Declaration

Lead Agency:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Fisheries Branch
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 92444-2090

Subject:

Notice of Intent to adopt negative declaration pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act, Article 6, Section 15074

Project Title:

Chinook Salmon Coastal Release: Monterey Harbor

Project Location:

Monterey County
Monterey Harbor (36.605514°, -121.889288°)

Project Description:

The MBSTP proposes to release 160,000 juvenile hatchery-origin Central Valley fall-run Chinook Salmon into Monterey Harbor in 2022, 2023 and 2024. All Project fish would be evaluated by a CDFW Fish Health pathologist and certified to be disease-free prior to leaving the hatchery. Fish will also be tagged with Coded-Wire Tags (CWT) and marked with an adipose fin-clip at a 100% rate for all years of the Project (2022-2024) to allow for evaluation of potential benefits and impacts of the Project. All smolts would be transported from MOK to Monterey Harbor in a single trip using 2-4 fish transport trucks. Trucks would be loaded, and fish transported according to MOK established standard operating procedures for transportation of salmon. Water in the trucks would be salted prior to adding fish at the hatchery.

MBSTP, in anticipation of fish delivery from MOK to the Monterey Harbor, has secured necessary equipment. MBSTP would release smolts from the trucks directly into Monterey Harbor, via a gravity-fed pipe (10 inches in diameter). MBSTP would provide both staffing and logistical support to facilitate release of fish at the Project location. This includes a 'tender' vessel provided and operated by MBSTP to assist in release of smolts from the height of the wharf to the water surface.

The Project is contingent upon CDFW approval after completion of CEQA. Project results will be assessed using data acquired from CDFW landings, carcass surveys, and monitoring programs.

Location and Custodian of the Negative Declaration Document:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Fisheries Branch
<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=199080>

Attention: Robyn Bilski
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Determination:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife finds that the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

The completed Initial Study, attached to this negative declaration, documents the basis for this finding, and CDFW's determination that no significant effect on the environment would occur as a result of Project implementation, and there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before CDFW, that the Project may have a significant effect on the environment (see Initial Study and environmental checklist). Therefore, a Negative Declaration has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resource Code Section 21080, subd. (c)(1).

The Initial Study concluded that the Project would have less than significant impacts to biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and public services. The Project would have no impacts to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry, air quality, cultural resources, energy,

geology/soils, hazards/hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, land use/planning, mineral resources, noise, population/housing, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities/service systems, and wildfire.

Negative Declaration:

A copy of the Negative Declaration, Initial Study, and supporting documents can be found on the Department's web site at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=199080>

Comments on the Negative Declaration will be received from February 28, 2022, through April 14, 2022.