Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044
1400 Tenth Street, Rm 2
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Region
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Project Title: California Estuary MPA Monitoring Program

Project Location: Nearshore and offshore waters of the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego

Project Description: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to the Moss Landing Marine Labs pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2081(a) for scientific purposes. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to take longfin smelt (*Spirinchus thaleichthys*), coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss),* and white sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*) during the course of sampling, subject to terms and conditions set forth in the permit. The purpose of this sampling is for the Moss Landing Marine Lab's Central Coast Wetlands Group to evaluate the condition of California's estuarine ecosystems of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and control sites. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to potentially capture longfin smelt, coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and white sturgeon during surveys. The applicant will conduct year-round research sampling of nearshore and estuarine marine species through the use of hook & line – surface, hook & line – baited dropper loop, beach seines, Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV), and bottom trawls through December 31, 2027.

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

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Kevin O'Connor, Moss Landing Marine Labs

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 sampling within nearshore and offshore waters of the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to longfin smelt, coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, or white sturgeon which are all listed under the California Endangered Species Act.

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

Signature: _____ **Date:** ___**4/23/2025**_____
Craig Shuman, Regional Manager, Marine Region

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