High- and Low-Energy Marine Surveys: Making Sense of California's New Geophysical Survey Permit Requirements

Prevention First
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Agenda

- Brief History of Offshore Geophysical Permit Program
- Basis for Updated Program: Low-Energy Surveys
- Program Coverage
- Environmental Concerns Addressed
- Requirements for Operators
- Q&A
Brief History of OGPP

1941
PRC Section 6826 enacted; CSLC has jurisdiction over geophysical activities in State waters

1984
MND adopted for permit program

1987
New conditions excluding high-energy devices

2008
Inclusion of mitigation measures to comply with CEQA

2011
CSLC receives funding from Ocean Protection Council

2013
CSLC adopts MND and Mitigation Monitoring Plan addressing low-energy geophysical activities
Basis for Updated Program

- Review of permitted activity between 2008 and 2012
- Up-to-date scientific research on underwater noise
- Ocean Science Trust peer review
- CEQA compliance through Adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program (MMP)
- Permit program mitigations consistent with the MMP

Source: CSLC 2013
Program Coverage: Overview

- State marine waters, exclusive of granted lands
- Three-year statewide non-exclusive General Permits
- Low-energy geophysical equipment
- High energy devices (e.g., airguns) are prohibited
### Program Coverage: Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment Type</th>
<th>Examples, Uses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subbottom Profilers</td>
<td>Seismic reflection profile data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echosounders, single- and multibeam</td>
<td>Site-specific bathymetry, seafloor features</td>
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<tr>
<td>Side-scan Sonars</td>
<td>Seafloor imagery</td>
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<td>Multi-component Systems</td>
<td>Combined systems</td>
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<td>Passive Systems</td>
<td>Magnetometer</td>
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Key Environmental Concerns

- Air/GHG emissions
- Biological resources
- Hazards/hazardous materials
- Recreation
- Commercial and recreational fisheries

Impact-producing factors:
- Vessel Presence
- Equipment Noise
- Obstruction from Equipment
- Light/glare from Vessels
- Vessel Emissions
- Potential for Accidents

Resources Affected:
- Air/GHG emissions
- Biological resources
- Hazards/hazardous materials
- Recreation
- Commercial and recreational fisheries
Requirements for Operators

Pre-Survey Notification Package
- Written Notifications
- Marine Wildlife Contingency Plan
- Oil Spill Contingency Plan
- Notification of Equipment Used

Marine Wildlife Protection
- Onboard Monitors
- Operational Procedures (e.g., soft start, safety zones, restricted nighttime operations)
- Collision Reporting
Requirements for Operators, cont’d

Post-Survey Reporting

- Narrative of work performed
- Charts/maps of survey area
- Encounters with marine species, outcome
- Reporting of shutdowns, slow-downs for mammals in safety zone
- Collision events, disposition
- Monitor reporting table (Exhibit H)
Project-Specific Considerations

Communication with staff to discuss project-specific considerations.

Examples:

- Vessel size, ability to accommodate monitors
- Type of equipment and amendment to monitor requirement
  - >200 khz
  - <200 khz
Thank you!