

DPC January 16, 2020 meeting – Agenda Item 11 (Recommendation on proposed modifications to California Fish and Game Commission striped bass policy)

**Delta Protection Commission Meeting**  
**January 16, 2020**

**AGENDA ITEM 11: Recommendation on proposed modifications to California Fish and Game Commission striped bass policy**

Prepared by: Melinda Dorin

Presented by: Erik Vink

Requested Action: **Receive report and consider transmittal of letter to California Fish and Game Commission**

Type of Action: Action Item

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**Background:** The existing California Fish and Game Commission (CFGF) Striped Bass Policy was adopted in 1996 and focuses on restoring and maintaining striped bass for recreational fishing opportunities. In June 2016, CFGF received a regulation change petition requesting an increase in the bag limit and a reduction in the minimum size limit for striped bass and black bass in the Delta and its tributary rivers. While the regulation change petition was formally withdrawn prior to CFGF action, CFGF requested that its Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) review the existing striped bass policy, which is different than the regulations.

CFGF is still reviewing and considering updating the policy. More recently, the proposed policy change was discussed by CFGF at its August 2019 and December 2019 meetings, but action was postponed in order to continue stakeholder discussions with CFGF staff, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and a broad array of stakeholders regarding the existing and proposed draft Striped Bass Policy.

As reported in the staff summary for the December 2019 CFGF meeting, significant disagreements remain with respect to revising the existing Striped Bass Policy. The staff summary states there was agreement to remove the current adult population goal of 3 million and the addition of further activities that CDFW is encouraged to undertake in support of striped bass.

Several sport-fishing groups in the Delta seek to preserve and restore the striped bass population in the Delta, have concerns over the proposed amendments to the Striped Bass Policy, and seek to maintain some measurable markers of population to support a valuable and recreationally-important fishery. Stakeholder input and testimony from fish scientists included statements that striped bass predation is not the primary cause of the decline of salmon and other listed fish species; further, striped bass populations have also declined significantly along with the listed fish species. While the proposed draft amended Striped Bass Policy neither

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includes language to reflect predation on listed species is a driver for listed species population reductions nor has an effort to eradicate striped bass from the Delta, it is apparent from the public comments that additional discussion and work by the CFGC is needed.

**Key Findings:** The Delta striped bass fishery supports an important recreational activity that contributes to the Delta recreational economy. Delta Protection Commission staff request the Delta Protection Commission consider transmitting a letter to CFGC requesting additional information be provided on why the Striped Bass Policy needs updating and to support continued use of numerical metrics.

**Recommended Action:** Staff recommends the Commission approve the draft letter to be sent to the California Fish and Game Commission

**Relationship to Vision 2030 (Commission strategic plan):**

*Education and Outreach (Strategic Theme)*

*O.1 Ensure consistent, proactive communications between and among Delta interests and decision makers.*

*Recreation and Tourism (Strategic Theme)*

*R.1 Partner with public agencies and private entities to encourage increased recreation and tourism in the Delta.*