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January 2015 E-Newsletter

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California Bans the Bag, But Bag Makers Fight Back

Last fall, the State Legislature enacted Senate Bill 270, making California the first state in the nation to adopt a law to ban plastic bags at grocery retailers statewide effective July 1, 2015. However, the plastic bag industry isn't giving up easily. Plastic bag manufacturers spent \$3.1 million (almost all from out-of-state sources) to collect signatures to place a referendum on the November 2016 ballot to overturn the bag ban. The signatures were submitted at the end of 2014, and if they are validated, the plastic bag makers will have succeeded in delaying implementation of the bag bill until after the November 2016 election. If California voters support the bag ban at the ballot box, it would likely go into effect in July 2017.



A recent poll conducted by USC and the LA Times showed that 60% of California voters support the bag ban and that support for banning plastic bags is even higher in communities that have already eliminated them. With more local ban ordinances going in effect throughout California this year, nearly 40% of the state will be covered by bag bans by year's end. Pending the outcome of the signature validation, Channelkeeper and our bag partners will resume our advocacy efforts for other local municipalities to join Santa Barbara and Carpinteria in adopting local bag ordinances. Stay tuned, and meanwhile, remember to use your reusable bags for all your shopping needs!

Hearing on Santa Barbara's Desalination Plant January 29

The City of Santa Barbara has asked the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to amend its permit for the City's sewage treatment plant to allow the City to draw seawater into its adjacent desalination plant through an open ocean intake. Channelkeeper has been advocating the City to investigate the feasibility of drawing seawater into the desalination plant through a subsurface intake, which would virtually eliminate the death of massive amounts of marine life caused by an open ocean intake. The State Water Board is on the verge of adopting a new policy which will require all new and expanded desalination facilities in California to utilize subsurface intakes as the environmentally superior technology unless it is demonstrated that they are infeasible on a case-by-case basis.



The California Water Code requires that desalination facilities use the best available site, design, technology, and mitigation measures feasible to minimize the intake and mortality of all forms of marine life. The RWQCB failed to certify



Did You Know?

MPAs are working!

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) at the Channel Islands have been in effect for 10 years. [A new study](#) found that sheephead in these MPAs are bigger and more abundant, and these bigger fish eat more urchins. Historical overfishing of large predator fish resulted in swarms of urchins decimating kelp forests throughout the Santa Barbara Channel. As a result of marine protection, kelp forests in MPAs are now thriving as bigger sheephead in MPAs control urchin populations. Learn more about [the study](#) and [go explore](#) our MPAs!



that the City complied with this requirement when it first permitted the desalination plant in 1991, so they are now seeking to make a retroactive determination of compliance so that the City can begin operating the facility again. The RWQCB solicited public comments on its proposed amendment to the City's permit in November - click [here](#) for the comment letter Channelkeeper submitted - and will consider adopting it at a public hearing in Santa Barbara on Thursday, January 29 (click [here](#) for the agenda and [here](#) for the proposed permit amendment).

Channelkeeper will urge the RWQCB to require, as a condition of the City's revised permit, that they conduct a subsurface intake feasibility analysis now and convert to a subsurface intake if it's found to be feasible by a date certain. Please join us at the hearing on January 29 and support Channelkeeper's advocacy to ensure that the City of Santa Barbara utilizes the best available technology - a subsurface intake - to minimize the mortality of marine life caused by its desalination plant.

Goleta City Council Stands Up to Protect Ellwood



Last month the City of Goleta took significant first steps to putting an end to processing oil at Ellwood. The Ellwood Onshore Facility (EOF), owned by Venoco, has been a legal non-conforming use ever since the City was established in 2002. The area surrounding Ellwood is host to several endangered and threatened species, critical habitat designations, and Marine Protected Areas, and many local residents and tourists use the area for recreation. Thanks to advocacy by Channelkeeper and our environmental allies, the Goleta City Council made several decisions in December that move to end the risky business of processing oil at this aging facility.

First, the Council voted unanimously to fund a study that will evaluate the cost and feasibility of requiring Venoco to shut down the EOF. They also voted unanimously to improve the administrative process for eliminating non-conforming uses such as the EOF. The Council also decided to take a strong stance against Venoco's current proposal to reopen a well at Pier 421-2 (closed in since 1994) and process the oil at the EOF. The City has made clear to Venoco and state agencies that the City is pursuing options to shut down the EOF and that any requests to process oil at the EOF will be met with resistance (Venoco currently has two such proposals to expand oil development in the area). Channelkeeper commends the City for their strong stance and looks forward to working together to continue to protect the Ellwood coast.



Download the Waterkeeper Swim Guide app for real-time water quality data at local beaches

Visit Website



Volunteers Needed! Snap the Shore, See the Future



King Tides will be hitting our shores again soon and Channelkeeper needs your help! From January 19-21 and again from February 17-19, the southern California coast will see the highest tides of the year. To help document the potential impacts of rising sea levels, Channelkeeper and other groups throughout California are calling on citizens to take photos during particularly high tides - known as "king tides" - of areas known to flood and erode, and areas where

high water levels can be gauged against sea walls, jetties, bridge supports or dikes. This initiative, known as the California King Tides Project, is helping to identify and catalog coastal areas vulnerable to tidal inundation, and to promote awareness of the specific potential impacts of sea level rise on our region in an effort to support climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.

Channelkeeper will be documenting the impacts of each king tide event on the ground and by boat, but we need your help! We hope to get shore-based photos of each beach for at least one day during each of the king tides. This [table](#) depicts the times and locations we need covered (green checkmarks indicate that those shifts have already been assigned). Photos at other beaches with infrastructure (seawalls, houses, buildings, pipes, etc.) are also appreciated. So get out your camera and [email](#) us if you are available to help document the tides during these times. Please [email](#) your photos to us and include your name and the date, time and location (latitude and longitude appreciated but not required) the photos were taken. If you have any questions, please [email](#) us or call 805.563.3377 ext. 5.

Celebrate our MPAs with Underwater Parks Day Saturday, January 17

January 17th is Underwater Parks Day - a day dedicated to educating the public about [Marine Protected Areas](#) (MPAs) and California's landmark initiative to establish a network of MPAs along its entire coast. Please join us in celebrating our local MPAs at the Sea Center's [Underwater Parks Day Festival](#) on Saturday, January 17th from 10am-3pm. There will be special fun for kids including hands on activities and marine science investigations. Stop by Channelkeeper's table to learn more about MPAs and how you can help monitor and promote them.



Help Monitor our Marine Protected Areas! Next Training Workshop: January 15



Do you enjoy long walks on the beach and helping to promote ocean conservation? Channelkeeper is looking for dedicated volunteers to help us record and track human activities in and adjacent to Santa Barbara's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) through our *MPA Watch* program. The information we collect is helping government agencies and scientists interpret how successful our MPAs are at rebuilding fish populations, while also informing MPA management and enforcement.

Becoming an *MPA Watch* volunteer is easy and fun. Save the date for the next volunteer training workshop on Thursday, January 15th at 6:30pm at UCSB in Bren Hall Room 4016. Snacks and drinks will be provided! If you want to attend or learn more about *MPA Watch*, please [email](#) or call us at 805.563.3377 ext. 4. Every *MPA Watch* volunteer will receive a free Channelkeeper t-shirt, and volunteers that complete 10 surveys will receive an additional treat!

Stream Team - January 10 & 11

Stream Team is Channelkeeper's volunteer-based water quality monitoring program. Every month, volunteers join Channelkeeper staff to test for common water quality parameters at numerous sites in the Ventura River and Goleta Valley watersheds. Come join us to help protect our local waterways. Stream Team in Ventura will meet at 9am on Saturday, January 10th and Goleta Stream Team will meet at 10am on Sunday, January 11th. For more information, visit our [website](#), [email](#) us or call 805.563.3377 ext. 5.



Become a Channelkeeper Member!



Your support for Channelkeeper's efforts is needed now more than ever. Become a member of the Channelkeeper crew today with your tax-deductible donation. You'll be investing in clean water and healthy communities along the Santa Barbara Channel today and for future generations. With your membership, you will receive our regular newsletters, news updates and action alerts, invitations to special Channelkeeper events and fun volunteer opportunities, and a free Channelkeeper sticker. All new donors contributing \$50 or more can also receive a Channelkeeper t-shirt, and for donations of \$250 or more, bi-annual issues of *Waterkeeper* magazine. Sign up today by calling 805.563.3377 ext. 2, [emailing](#) us, or clicking [here](#).