



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
CALIFORNIA

Via electronic delivery

June 18, 2024



Honorable Diane Papan
Chair, Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 160
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ACR 210 (Bennett) – OPPOSE

Dear Chairwoman Papan,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our hundreds of thousands of supporters, we respectfully wish to express our opposition to ARC 210 (Bennett) as introduced. California is blessed with abundant resources and unrivaled natural beauty. Our fish and wildlife resources have provided food for generations of our citizens, as well as ample opportunity to enjoy fishing and hunting with their families and friends. These pastimes provide Californians with opportunities to connect with the land, water, fish and wildlife and develop a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, the link between professional science-based land and water management actions that result in healthy habitats, abundant fish and wildlife, thriving sporting opportunities, and an increased gratitude for the resources that our ecosystems can provide.

These connections have also resulted in America's anglers (and hunters) emerging as some of the nation's most invested conservationists, contributing upwards of \$3 billion nationally directly to state-based conservation each year. The outdoor sporting community continues to support and invest in land and water protection through management efforts that acknowledge the necessity of conserving ecosystems alongside associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management models.

We object to the introduction of ACR 210 that is being unnecessarily inserted into the current deliberative regulatory and scientific process that the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGF), the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and the public are already engaged and working on. This process, underway for well over two years now, is an inclusive and scientifically based process to consider changes to the state's marine environment regulatory system to address concerns about potential biodiversity loss due to climate change.

We would like to put particular emphasis on our opposition to ACR 210 on the language in the resolution that calls for more blanket fishing closures, in the form of “fully protected” and “highly protected” marine protected areas (MPAs). We also are very concerned that the resolution circumvents the established mechanisms of the MPA Decadal Management Review and the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and Executive Order No. N-82-20 (30x30), which both include JEDI governance so all voices in this public process have identical access and carry equal weight, and instead applies pressure to influence outcomes of these processes directly through legislative action.

We agree that our ocean’s biodiversity faces many challenges and strongly support the aim of both 30x30 and the MLPA. We fully agree with 30x30’s goals of protecting and enhancing biodiversity, expanding equitable access to nature, and building resilience to climate change. However, there are many stressors to ocean ecosystems far beyond the impact of angling, such as failing municipal sewage treatment infrastructure causing almost constant coastal water contamination, municipal storm drainage systems carrying toxic street runoff to the sea, micro plastics getting to the point that they have been estimated to one day outnumber plankton, herbicide and pesticide used in agriculture finding their way into the marine environment, ocean temperature rise, ocean acidification, and much more. ACR 210, with its specific focus on angling, does not address or propose solutions to any of these broader more systemic issues.

There were 2.4 million fishing licenses sold in California in 2023, generating millions in revenue for CDFW. Further, the fishing industry in California supports over 43,000 jobs, and recreational fishing contributes \$6.2 billion dollars in economic output annually in California. There are few other groups who’s present and future are more deeply connected to the persistent health of our marine ecosystems. We are committed to working alongside the CDFW, the CFGC, and the OPC to ensure our ocean resources are managed for the benefit of all stakeholders.

It is imperative for the health of our oceans and for the justice, equity, and inclusion of all of California’s diverse ocean users that this body flatly reject the unscientific and emotional call for more blanket fishing closures in ACR 210 and rather allow the well-structured and egalitarian MLPA and 30x30 to play out as legislated and ordered, without undue political bias. Our coalition looks forward to working with state and federal regulatory agencies on the development of a science-based approach to addressing the protection and restoration of biodiversity on the California coast.

For these reasons we respectfully oppose ACR 210 and ask that you vote no when this measure is heard in committee.

Sincerely,

Matt Bond
Allwaters Protection and Access Coalition

Wayne Kotow
Coastal Conservation Association of California

Marc Gorenik
Coastside Fishing Club

Larry Philips
American Sportfishing Association

Devin O'Dea
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Cc: Asm. Steve Bennett