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March 12, 2015

On March 12, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced the expansion of the Gulf of the Farallones and the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries, off the coast of California, in a final rule that adds 2,770 square miles to the pre-existing protected marine areas. The rule prohibits oil, gas, and mineral extraction and development, but does allow boating. NOAA has currently instated a 6-month stay on discharge regulations, which typically prevent dumping of oil or treated sewage into marine sanctuary waters, while they review Coast Guard concerns about the discharge regulations. The revised designations will take effect after a review period of 45-days of continuous session of Congress beginning March 12.

Source: E&E News, NOAA, the White House

Updated 4/6/15
