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FACT SHEET

Assembly Bill 2485 (Jones & Laird)

Sea Otters: Saving a California Coastal Treasure

Summary

AB 2485 takes steps to stop the numbers of sea otters along California's central coast from a continued decline. The bill increases fines and penalties for the illegal taking of sea otters, creates a research program focused on further reducing sea otter mortality, establishes a tax check off benefiting sea otter research and protection, and increases efforts to lower the level of *T-gondii* entering the sea otter habitat.

Background

California sea otters are fully protected marine mammals. In 1977 when they were put on the federal endangered species list, a great effort was made to stop the killing of sea otters for their fur. In recent years, however, the numbers have started to decrease. The California sea otters face multiple hurdles and researchers are still studying the best solutions to these problems. Some factors have been identified, and are addressed in this bill.

This Bill

- Increases fines and penalties for illegal taking or killing of sea otters to up to \$25,000 for each sea otter, raising it to equal federal fines and penalties.
- Fish and Game Code 5650 prohibits depositing, passing or allowing to pass into the waters of the state any substance or material deleterious to fish, plant life, or bird life. This bill will expand 5650 to include mammals as well.
- Establishes a tax check off benefiting sea otter research and protection.
- Shows the intent of the legislature to create a research program administered through the California Coastal Conservancy to study sea otter mortality from non point source pollution, and treatment technologies for pathogens affecting sea otter mortality.
- Changes cat litter packaging to encourage landfilling of cat litter and therefore reducing the levels of *T-gondii* in waste water released in the sea otter natural habitat.

Support

Monterey Bay Aquarium
Defenders of Wildlife
Natural Resources Defense Council
The Otter Project
Friends of the Sea Otter
Environment California
The Ocean Conservancy
California Federation for Animal Legislation
Animal Switchboard
Paw Pac
California Fish and Game Wardens' Association

Support Continued

California Sea Urchin Commission

Congressmember Sam Farr

Congressmember Anna Eshoo

Congressmember George Miller

Congressmember Grace Napolitano

Congressmember Lois Capps

Congressmember Mike Thompson

Congressmember Michael Honda

Congressmember Barbara Lee

Congressmember Lynn Woolsey

Congressmember Henry Waxman

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