




State of California – Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
Marine Region  
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor  
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



**Date:** September 1, 2016

**To:** Commercial lobster operator permit holder or buyer

**From:** Craig Shuman, D. Env.   
Marine Region Manager  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Subject:** California Department of Public Health Domoic Acid Monitoring for the 2016-17 California Spiny Lobster Season

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is providing notification that the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) plans to monitor the levels of domoic acid in lobsters as part of its marine toxins monitoring program. Please see the enclosed memo, which contains information on domoic acid, domoic acid monitoring, and the management approach used for handling domoic acid events for California Dungeness crab and rock crab fisheries.

Domoic acid is a naturally occurring toxin related to a “bloom” of a single-celled diatom called *Pseudo-nitzschia* in ocean waters that can be accumulated in the viscera and muscle tissue of crustaceans, fish, and shellfish. For seafood safety, the US Food and Drug Administration has established an action level of 20 parts per million (ppm) domoic acid for all seafood except in the viscera of Dungeness crab, where 30 ppm is permitted. Last year, CDPH found elevated levels of domoic acid exceeding the federal action level in Dungeness and rock crab along a large portion of the California coastline, which resulted in the closure of both the commercial and sport Dungeness crab and rock crab fisheries until tests showed that domoic acid had declined to safe levels. Additional information on domoic acid health advisories for California finfish, shellfish, and crustaceans can be found on the CDPH website at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/Pages/fdbDomoicAcidInfo.aspx>.

The Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture convened a special legislative hearing on August 10, 2016, that discussed impacts of the 2015-16 crab season closures, lessons learned, and preparedness for future domoic acid episodes. Information and archived video of the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture August 10, 2016 hearing is available at <http://fisheries.legislature.ca.gov/content/august-10-2016-progress-reports-crab-season-domoic-acid-and-disaster-declaration>.

CDFW is committed to helping the lobster fishery manage circumstances if elevated domoic acid levels are detected. If you have any questions regarding the CDPH domoic acid monitoring program, please contact Patrick Kennelly at (916) 650-6598 or email at [Pat.Kennelly@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Pat.Kennelly@cdph.ca.gov). If you have questions or comments for CDFW please contact Tom Mason at [Tom.Mason@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Tom.Mason@wildlife.ca.gov).

Enclosure

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