Beat: Lifestyle

Residents worry that Channel Islands Harbor is going stagnant

Water quality is deteriorating

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USPA NEWS - Residents are expressing concerns following the shut down of the Mandalay Generating Station and its circulating pumps that used to feed 10 million gallons of "once through" cooling water into the Edison Canal, which connects the generating station to the harbor. Algae, odors, dead fish and discolored water could be, according to Dianne Merrill, a long-time resident and member of the Channel Islands Yacht Club, the "canary in the coal mine." After a hastily called meeting by Mayor Tim Flynn on June 18, 2018, The City of Oxnard Director of Public Works, Rosemarie Gaglione stated “This isn´t something we´re taking lightly.“

In response to recent reports from harbor residents, the City of Oxnard announced a series of immediate steps, given the potential seriousness of the problem, including hiring a contract marine biologist to determine the causes and, depending on those findings, propose a remediation plan. The City has also set up several monitoring stations and will test an aeration system to increase oxygen in the water.

On July 1, 15,000 juvenile white sea bass were released from the "grow out" pens located in the harbor. According to Frank Sullivan, the pen manager, almost 3000 of the original 18,000 fish died before release, much higher than usual. Mr. Sullivan said “While the science isn´t in, the closing of the Mandalay Generating Station and the shutting off of the pumps is partially causing the lower oxygen levels and higher water temperatures. These and other factors account for the higher mortality rates.“

A number of residential, commercial and recreational interests will be impacted if the water quality in the harbor deteriorates. The Channel Islands Harbor is a major Southern California attraction and concerns are running high.

This is a developing story.

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