

National Weather Service

Proposed Marine Forecast Zone Changes

The San Francisco Bay Area National Weather Service Office in Monterey, California is proposing edits to the marine forecast zones within their area of forecast responsibility. These edits are designed to improve usability for customers of the marine forecast, increase consistency amongst various National Weather Service products, and increase the ease of understandability for the marine zone products.

Currently, all marine forecasts and watch/warning/advisory products are issued for specific marine zones which can cover hundreds of square miles. This can produce seeming inconsistencies where one large marine zone may be experiencing completely different conditions than another portion of the same zone. Wind speeds may be high and necessitate the issuance of a small craft advisory for an entire marine zone, but in the other portion of the marine zone, winds are lighter than advisory criteria, which can contribute to customer confusion over the actual forecast.

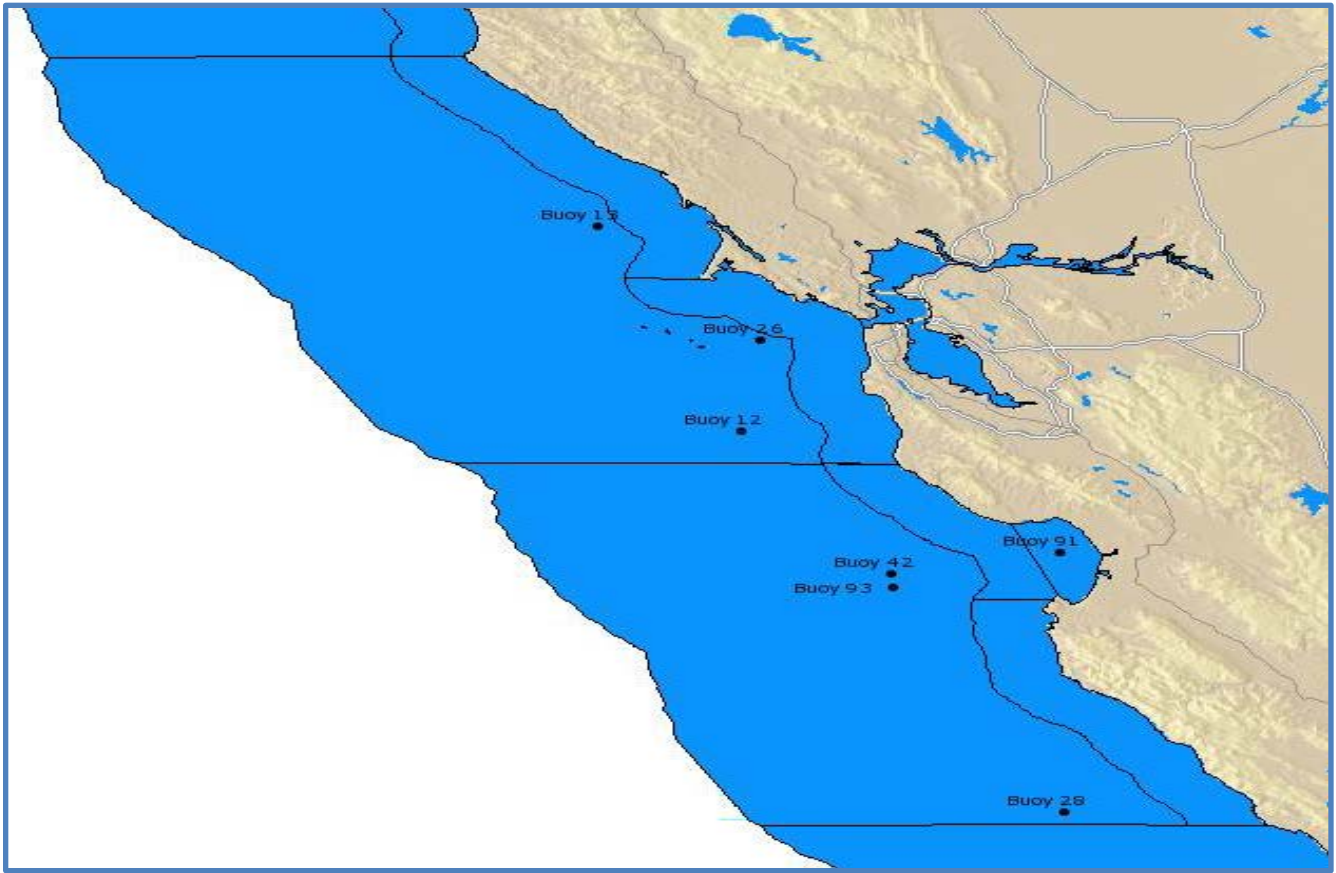
In addition, San Francisco Bay is an important marine area that experiences wide variations across its length in weather conditions. Some areas are frequently reaching advisory criteria with higher winds while others remain with lighter winds. The San Francisco Bar is also significantly important to the local marine community but is currently not specifically forecasted for in its own zone.

The National Weather Service believes that decreasing the size of the large zones in the Pacific (which extend from 10 NM to 60 NM offshore) will improve the accuracy of zone/advisory forecasts and reduce inconsistencies as well as improve the product's utility for customers. Introducing a new zone for the San Francisco Bar as well as splitting the San Francisco Bay Zone into 2 zones will also create a more accurate and useful forecast across some of the most heavily used marine areas.

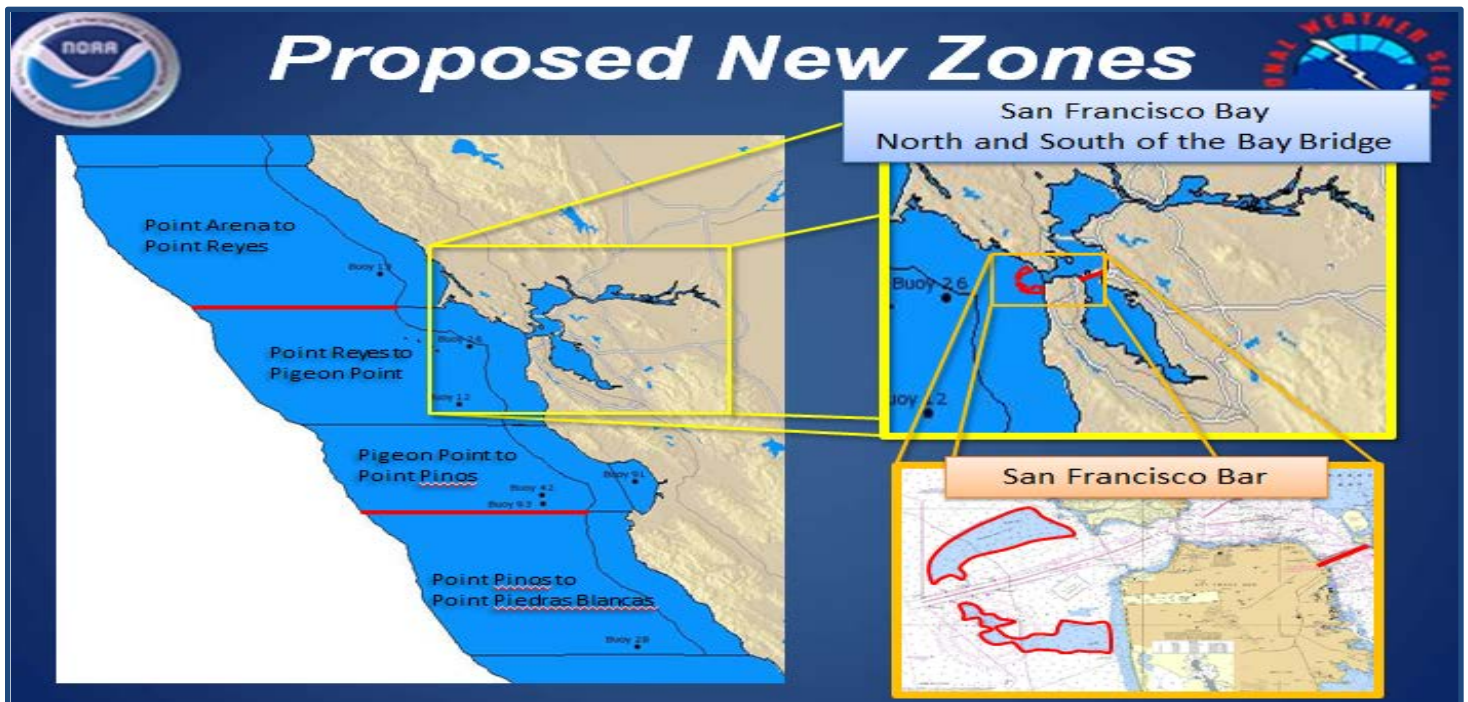
Before making any changes that will impact our customers, the National Weather Service is seeking feedback from users on the proposed zone changes. Specifically if the forecast zone changes will improve the usefulness of marine products, and if the proposed zone break points depicted in the graphics on the next page would be adequate or if different breaks would be more useful. Feedback will be very useful that includes information from the vast knowledge and experience of our partners to ensure that any changes we make will be beneficial ones and follow typical wind patterns in the Bay.

Please send feedback to NWS Marine Team Leader – Carolina Walbrun Carolina.walbrun@noaa.gov

No later than December 15, 2012.



Current Marine Zones



*Proposed changes to marine zone boundaries in red.
Splits proposed in Bay at the Bay Bridge and Bar.*