



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AB 634 BECOMES LAW

A two-year effort by California Ships to Reefs (CSTR) to lay the ground work for artificial reefing projects in California was hailed as successful when Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 634 into law July 15.

The bill, sponsored by Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point, protects state and local governments from liability associated with scuba diving, particularly on ship-based artificial reefs. Without this protection, government agencies would be reluctant to allow reefing in their jurisdictions.

"California Ships to Reefs is proud of its all volunteer organization, the Legislature and Governor for passing AB 634. The Governor's signature comes at an historic time, the tenth anniversary of *HMCS Yukon's* reefing in San Diego," said Joel Geldin, Chairman and CEO of California Ships to Reefs. "Today, California has removed a major impediment to artificial reefing. We are enthusiastic about the new unlimited opportunities ahead to create a network of artificial reefs on the state's coastline, improving ocean life and enhancing our recreational diving and fishing industries," Geldin added.

The well organized lobbying campaign by CSTR helped propel the bill through the Legislature with remarkable bipartisan support. Dean Rewerts, Vice President of Reef Development of CSTR said, "We appreciate how the Legislature was able to reach across the aisle and pass AB 634 without a single no vote, working for the common good of California. California Ships to Reefs believes the entire state owes thanks to Assemblywoman Diane Harkey for her foresight in carrying AB 634, making it easier to create man-made reefing projects in California to the benefit of the state and the environment."

Assemblywoman Harkey commented, "Fear of lawsuits has hampered efforts to expand recreational activities in many communities. I am pleased that Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law our legislation reducing liability for local and state governments while allowing for more recreational activities such as scuba diving, aiding coastal economies, the environment and the state of California."

California Ships to Reefs is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation whose mission is to create artificial reefs by sinking decommissioned military or retired commercial vessels near harbors, where they quickly become breeding grounds for new ocean life. The rejuvenated ocean environments attract divers, fishermen and other recreational opportunities, pumping additional income into local businesses.

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