

Pacific Marine Conservation Council

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February 17, 2004

Donald K. Hansen, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Re: Individual Fishing Quota considerations for the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery

Dear Chairman Hansen,

Pacific Marine Conservation Council (PMCC) is dedicated to the work of ensuring sustainable fisheries for the coastal communities that depend on commercial and recreational fishing revenue. PMCC is very concerned that individual fishing quota (IFQ) systems, while offering potential for management of certain fisheries, could have negative consequences for the diversity and integrity of historic fishing communities. Without exceptionally thoughtful planning, IFQs could cause far more problems than they are expected to solve.

Establishment of an IFQ program for the West Coast trawl fleet would be a major departure from current management systems. The current IFQ discussion emerges during a period in which the groundfish fishery has already seen substantial change. Rebuilding plans for nine species of groundfish are in various stages of development. The Council has made unprecedented use of spatial management in closing large areas of the continental shelf to specific gear effort. Ninety-two limited entry trawl permits were recently removed from the fishery at a cost of \$46 million. Vehicle Monitoring Systems are being explored as management and enforcement tools. New information regarding bycatch, species distribution, habitat association and co-occurrence of species is becoming available through the West Coast observer program.

Prior to taking the radical step of seriously considering IFQ-based management, it is essential to review and analyze the impacts of recent changes to the groundfish fishery, and new information that is now available, through the vehicle of a comprehensive supplemental programmatic environmental impact statement. The National Environmental Policy Act (at 40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(c)) requires preparation of supplemental EIS when “the agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns;” or when “there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.” The groundfish fishery certainly qualifies on both accounts, and it would be entirely appropriate for

the Pacific Fishery Management Council to urge NOAA Fisheries to begin work on a programmatic EIS as soon as possible.

PMCC does not advocate for a programmatic EIS simply to create yet another document. We believe that an open public process examining all aspects of this fishery, in all their complex relationships, will prove valuable as future actions are contemplated – including IFQs.

Ultimately any IFQ system that is developed should meet basic standards to protect sport fishing interests, commercial fishing businesses, coastal communities, and the public interest. IFQs must not in any way be construed to be property rights; rather, they are fishing privileges to be granted for a set duration. There must be fair and equitable initial allocation of shares and strict limits on accumulation of quota. There needs to be a mechanism for independent review of the systems. As an IFQ program is developed, management should seek to preserve the full range of historical participation in the fishery, rather than simply favoring the most efficient operations. Fishermen participating in the groundfish fishery should have the opportunity to vote whether to develop or approve an IFQ system. And the public deserves to see a conservation benefit from granting IFQ privileges, including incentives for use of gear which has the least bycatch and the least adverse impacts on habitat. Unfortunately, what we've seen from the Council's Ad Hoc Trawl IFQ Committee does not conform to most of these standards.

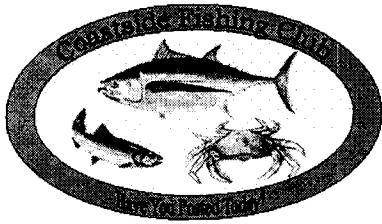
PMCC is providing members of the Council with copies "*Who Owns America's Fisheries*," by Seth Macinko and Daniel Bromley (Island Press, 2002). We offer this information as background on the subject of IFQs and "rights-based" fishing. While we find some interest in the royalty auction described in the text, we are not at this time advocating for such an approach. Macinko and Bromley do offer some fresh perspectives that we hope that the Council members will find intriguing. You might also consider reviewing the National Research Council report "*Sharing the Fish: Toward a National Policy on Individual Fishing Quotas*" 1999, National Academy Press.

Thank you for considering our comments. If you have any questions please call me at (503) 325-8188.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter Huhtala
Senior Policy Director



Coastside Fishing Club
PO Box 1422, El Granada CA 94018

4 P.M. Public Comment 2
March 2004

14 February, 2004

Don Hansen, Chair PFMC

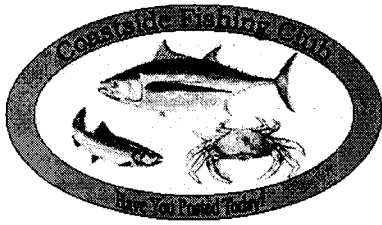
As you know there has been widespread concern regarding the accuracy of the recreational catch estimates generated by the MRFSS process. Consequently, California is replacing that process with its own CRFS methodology. While the Coastside Fishing Club is optimistic about this change, this new system is too new to be a proven estimator of recreational fishing catch. At the November PFMC meeting in San Diego, the Coastside Fishing Club presented an alternate methodology that resulted in significantly lower estimates of recreational catch. However, the Coastside methodology had not been reviewed and approved by the SSC, and therefore California and the PFMC were unable to utilize its estimate in making the 2003 in-season adjustments. We continue improving our process as we prepare to make recreational catch estimates for 2004.

Until the new California CRFS system demonstrates a track record of accurate estimates of recreational catch, the Coastside Fishing Club and the rest of the recreational community will continue to be concerned. In order to develop confidence in the CRFS methodology, the Coastside Fishing Club continues to develop our independent assessment of recreational catch, which may then be compared with the CRFS estimates. Having an independent estimate to compare with the CRFS estimates, can be a powerful tool in the process of validating the CRFS methodology.

Furthermore, having more than one "approved" method of recreational catch estimation would enable the California Department of Fish and Game to evaluate, and adjust for, anomalous variations in any single process. Had this dual capability been available, last year's wave three MRFSS anomaly could potentially have been discarded, and replaced with catch estimates that better represented the actual catch. Or, should both estimates indicate an anomalous high (or low) catch estimate, then confidence in that anomaly would be established.

However, in order to serve as a validation methodology, or as an anomaly check, both methodologies need to be peer reviewed and found to be credible. Consequently, the Coastside Fishing Club requests the PFMC, in particular the SSC, review our process, and either approve its use for these purposes, or suggest changes that would make it acceptable for these purposes.

At the November meeting in San Diego, the Council did in fact ask the SSC to review the Coastside methodology. However the Coastside Fishing Club was unsure how to follow up with this direction. Consequently we contacted Tom Barnes, who directed us to Dan Waldeck. Discussions with Dan clarified that we should make a formal request for



Coastside Fishing Club

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review via the Chair of the PFMC, consequently this letter to you. In addition, because of the need to validate the untried CRFS process, it is imperative that the Coastside methodology be reviewed at the earliest possible date in order that it be available for use during calendar year 2004.

To that end, please contact Dan Wolford of the Coastside Fishing Club, for information concerning the revised Coastside estimation methodology and data. He can be reached at the following.

Phone	408 356-2465
FAX	408 356-4325
Email	danwolford@earthlink.net
Mail	16171 Jasmine Way Los Gatos, CA 95032

Please let him know the nature of the information required by the SSC for their evaluation of the process, and to determine an appropriate time and place for discussions with the SSC.

Sincerely,

orig /s/ Dan Wolford

Dan Wolford, director
Coastside Fishing Club

Copies to Bob Franko
Darrell Ticehurst
Tom Barnes
Dan Waldeck