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August 24, 2006

Mr. Donald K. Hansen, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 N.E. Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

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PFMC

Dear Chairman Hansen:

It has been brought to the Port of Newport's attention by members of Newport's shoreside whiting fleet that action on PFMC Amendment 15 is urgently needed at this time to counteract large American Fisheries Act (AFA) catcher vessels without pre-AFA onshore whiting history from overcapitalizing in and destabilizing the fishery.

The recommended directive in 1999 was that the PFMC would insure that AFA vessels that had not participated in the inshore whiting fishery by the control date of September 16, 1999 would most likely be restricted. However, due to PFMC workload, the shore-based whiting fishery, as well as other West Coast groundfish fisheries, has not been protected. The direct result has been an abbreviated whiting season. This year, the season was 12 days shorter than 2005, adversely impacting the owners and crews of boats that pioneered and invested in this fishery.

The Port of Newport strongly urges the Council to stay with the control date recommended in 1999 and adopt the necessary sideboard regulations to provide the historic vessels participating in the shore-based whiting fishery the protection they are entitled to as established by the intent of the American Fisheries Act.

Sincerely,

Rob Halverson
President

C: David Jincks, MTC