

APPLICATION FOR ISSUANCE OF AN EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT TO TEST A  
SUSTAINABLE HOOK AND LINE FISHERY FOR CHILIPEPPER ROCKFISH OUTSIDE  
THE NON TRAWL RCA IN CENTRAL CALIFORNIA (40°10' N LAT.-34°27' N LAT.)

**Date of application:** 5/21/07

**Applicant Name:**

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**Purposes and Goals of the Proposed Experiment**

The goal of the exempted fishing permit is to develop a sustainable method for harvesting the abundant stocks of chilipepper rockfish in the central California region (40°10' N Lat.-36° N Lat.). Another goal is to eliminate bycatch.

- Design a low impact, hand operated equipment only (rod and reel) fishery model that could be replicated to allow for higher trip limits for vessels in this area.
- Restore the historic method of fishing with vertical gear for shelf rockfish and re-establish a sustainable fishery that strives for total retention.

The specific goals of the experiment are to:

- Develop a harvest method that is equally accessible to vessels of all sizes
- 100 hooks maximum per vessel
- Fifty feet of empty (no hooks) line between the weight and the first hook with a vertically fished line
- No bait allowed
- All lines must stay attached to vessel
- Daylight hours only
- Must contact the port sampler prior to fishing to allow biological sampling of the landed catch on the dock
- Full observer coverage with the participants bearing the cost

All fishing will take place within two small Groundfish Fishing Areas (GFAs) known to be good chilipepper grounds.

38.07 to 38.10... 123.20 to 123.27 located on the east side of the Bodega canyon

38.25 to 38.30... 123.35 to 123.38 located on the west side of Bodega canyon

No fishing inside 100 fm

### **Disposition of Fish Harvested under the Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP)**

Species caught may be retained and sold.

Annual caps:

Chilipepper...40,000 lbs

Boccaccio...7,000 lbs

Widow...7,000 lbs

Canary ...50 lbs

Cow cod...50 lbs

Golden eye...50 lbs

Full retention of all slope rockfish

The market potential is very strong for these fish because they have been scarce for so many years. Prices of two dollars a pound are not uncommon.

### **Justification Explaining Why an EFP is Warranted**

The traditional "fixed gear" fishery has two tragic flaws. First, is the fact that it is a bottom contact fishery. This EFP proposes a non-bottom contact fishery that could be replicated throughout California. The experiment will use a vertical line to fish for chilipepper (which swim in mid-water) that will minimize contact with the bottom.

Traditional fixed gear uses bait and bait has a higher chance of catching depleted stocks, especially if the bait is laying on or near the bottom.

This EFP hopes to demonstrate the ability of vertical gears to harvest abundant stocks while minimizing take of depressed stocks.

Another major goal of this EFP is to reduce by catch and strive toward total retention. Current regulations have created a situation where discard is inevitable. I have fished rockfish thirty years, for twenty three of those years, I never discarded a fish. Due to regulations over the past seven years, I have been forced to discard fish every time I go out. In the process of trying to catch my allotted quota of a chilipepper, I am forced to throw back un-allotted widows and bocaccio that come to the surface dead. In those seven years, I always stopped fishing before I reached my quota of chilipepper because the discard factor became too disgusting. Mandatory discard has removed the honor from what was once my favorite fishery. This experiment will explore whether discard can be virtually eliminated using the rod and reel model.

### **Statement of Project Significance**

Historically, the three major ports in this area (Bodega Bay, San Francisco Bay, and Half Moon Bay) all had significant hook and line landings. The ex-vessel values of hook and line caught fish have always been much higher than trawl caught fish of the same species. If this EFP is successful, it could restore a vibrant hook and line fishery to these ports. An increase in boats using hook and line to catch fewer fish of higher value will be more efficient, have less

environmental impact, and benefit local economies with a high quality, high value product. Prior to the turn of the century all fish were harvested with hook and line. This EFP has the potential to restore a truly “historic” method of take for shelf rockfish.

**Vessels to be Covered by the EFP**

FV Palo FG 27309 GF 0056 Josh Churchman  
FV Hazel A Ed Paasch

Both vessels have fished these waters for over twenty years and were chosen because of their local knowledge of the fishery and the markets.

**Other EFP Specifications**

- All fishing will take place seaward of 100 fm.
- All vessels will declare the time and place of landing to allow access to interested biologists.
- All vessels will have a VMS system.
- A standardized data collection and reporting format will be coordinated by the California Department of Fish and Game, NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center, and Pacific States Marine Fisheries who currently is monitoring all fish from FV Palo
- All vessels will be subject to the current observer requirements.

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