



## Port Orford Ocean Resource Team

Agenda Item E.3.d  
Public Comment  
September 2008

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August 19, 2008

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

Dear Chairman Hansen:

I am writing on behalf of the Port Orford Ocean Resource Team and fishermen in Port Orford to ask the Council to consider modifications to the commercial 2A Pacific halibut fishery and the hook and line sablefish fishery to allow retention of incidentally caught halibut that are currently discarded in hook and line sablefish fisheries south of Pt. Chehalis.

The purpose of this request is to reduce discard mortality of incidentally caught halibut in the hook and line fisheries – consistent with the Council's desire to reduce bycatch. We understand that the National Marine Fisheries Service may be providing estimates of discard mortality for the hook and line sablefish fishery. It is likely the overall halibut TAC will be reduced by the estimated mortality in our hook and line fisheries for sablefish. We encourage the Council to consider management options that include full retention of bycatch species in the sablefish fishery and minimize bycatch mortality of halibut. What better way to utilize this valuable resource rather than discarding it as is now required south of Pt. Chehalis?

This summer POORT conducted interviews with fishermen and a processor in Washington and Oregon who have an interest in both the halibut and sablefish fisheries. Although there were some who were mostly satisfied with the present management of halibut and sablefish, the majority felt that there needed to be some changes in the commercial 2A halibut fishery to allow for the retention of bycatch in the hook and line fishery for sablefish.

We recognize that there are a wide range of interests in both the sablefish and halibut directed fisheries, and that our small survey was not a comprehensive review of all stakeholder's opinions. We encourage the Council to initiate the process of developing options for allowing retention of Pacific halibut in the sablefish hook and line fishery that would otherwise be discarded in this fishery south of Pt. Chehalis. We look forward to discussing options for future management of Pacific halibut with other commercial users and the Council family.

Thank your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Leesa Cobb, Executive Director

August 20, 2008

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

Dear Chairman Hansen:

I commercial fish at Port Orford, OR. The 2A commercial halibut fishery is open access; I get a permit but there is no point because we can't access the fish under the current management. We know there is halibut off of Port Orford, but we can't catch them for several reasons:

1. The derby is dangerous for small boats
2. The boat limit is based on the length of your vessel so small boats get few fish
3. The RCA closed our halibut fishing grounds

Against those odds, I do get out and try to catch some halibut. It isn't working.

When I fish for sablefish, I catch halibut as bycatch. And I discard the halibut trip after trip. I want to keep some bycatch of halibut and ask that you add that as an option to the 2A fishery. It seems senseless to discard the halibut and then try to fish in a derby fishery that doesn't work.

Please start the process today to add a bycatch option to 2A halibut management.

Sincerely,



Chris Aiello  
F/V J&C

August 20, 2008

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Chairman  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
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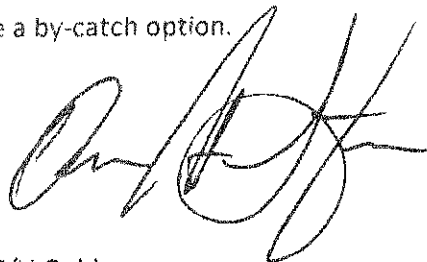
Dear Chairman Hansen,

My name is Aaron Longton. I have fished out of Port Orford for 20 years and have participated in the nearshore rockfish, salmon, tuna, and hook and line sablefish fisheries. During my involvement with the sablefish fishery, I have encountered halibut bycatch. The current management scheme for the halibut is wasteful in that we must throw back the halibut unless it is during the 10 hour opener.

The Port of Port Orford is positioned directly on the Pacific Ocean, making it vulnerable to storms. With our small boats, fishing in storms is difficult. We cannot always participate in the halibut openers, and our opportunity to retain halibut is limited by this. The closure of the RCA has put our historic halibut grounds off limits. This set of circumstances has an impact on our entire fishing fleet. Because of this, I support a change the 2A Halibut fishery to include an option for halibut bycatch retention in the sablefish fishery.

Please take action at this Council meeting to begin the process to change the 2A commercial halibut fishery to include a by-catch option.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Longton', written over a white background.

Aaron Longton, F/V Goldeneye

August 20, 2008

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

Dear Chairman Hansen:

I have commercial fished for 25 years for groundfish, tuna, crab and halibutfish in Oregon and California. I am writing to you today about 2A commercial halibut fishery management.

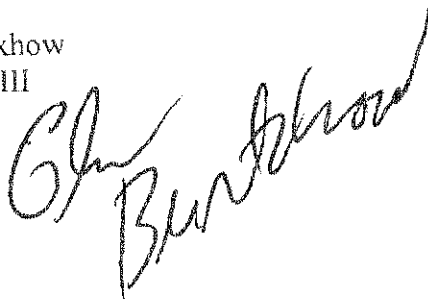
While I fished for halibut for years, over time the management changes have slowly excluded me from the fishery. The derby is tough for small boats, length of vessel as a basis for the amount of fish you are allowed further excludes opportunity for small boats, and the RCA closure put our halibut grounds off limits to fishing. This is an unfortunate set of circumstances that combined have impact this entire fishing community.

Meanwhile, when I fish for blackcod I continuously discard halibut. This seems like a waste to me. I support a change to the 2A commercial halibut fishery that allows halibut to be retained when it is caught as by-catch in the blackcod fishery.

Please take action at this Council meeting to begin the process to change the 2A commercial halibut fishery to include a by-catch option.

Thank you,

Glenn Burkhaw  
F/V Eagle III

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn Burkhaw". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

August 19, 2008

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

Dear Chairman Hansen:

My name is Steve Hatfield. I have been commercial fishing out of Port Orford for six years.

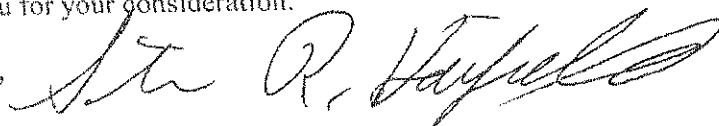
I have tried to fish in the 2A commercial halibut fishery but the management of a derby fishery and the low limits for small boats have made it almost impossible. The RCA closure has made this fishery even more difficult for me because it closes our halibut grounds off of Port Orford.

I catch halibut when I fish for blackcod. I would like to retain some portion of my halibut bycatch in the blackcod fishery so that I can participate in the halibut fishery. It would be more beneficial to my business if I could retain some of the halibut. It is wasteful to continually discard the halibut when I longline for blackcod. Those fish should be brought in and sold, not dumped overboard.

Please act today to change the 2A commercial halibut management to include an option to retain halibut in the blackcod fishery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Steve Hatfield

F/V Crystal Sea

F/V Dottie B

F/V Miss Emily

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Pacific Fishery Management Council  
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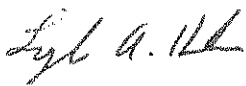
Dear Chairman Hansen,

My name is Lyle Keeler. I have fished out of Port Orford for 40 years and have participated in the nearshore rockfish, salmon, crab, tuna, shrimp, grenadier, and hook and line sablefish fisheries. I have also participated in the halibut fishery and derbies since 1976. Some years it was up to 1/3 of my net income. Since the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) was implemented in 2002, I have only 1 halibut landing.

The Port of Port Orford is positioned directly on the Pacific Ocean, making it vulnerable to storms. With our small boats, fishing in storms is difficult. We cannot always participate in the halibut openers, and our opportunity to retain halibut is limited by this.

It is time to change the 2A Halibut fishery to include an option for halibut bycatch retention in the sablefish fishery. Please make this change so that we can include people who used to fish halibut.

Thank you,



Lyle Keeler, F/V Dominion and F/V My Girl

August 20, 2008

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Pacific Fishery Management Council  
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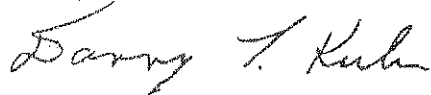
Dear Chairman Hansen,

My name is Danny Keeler. I have fished out of Port Orford for 40 years and have participated in the nearshore rockfish, salmon, crab, tuna, shrimp, grenadier, and hook and line sablefish fisheries. When fishing for sablefish, I have encountered a large amount of halibut bycatch.

Our port is positioned directly on the Pacific Ocean, making it vulnerable to storms. With our small boats, fishing in storms is difficult. We cannot always participate in the halibut openers, and our opportunity to retain halibut is limited by this.

It is time to change the 2A Halibut fishery to include an option for halibut bycatch retention in the sablefish fishery. Please make this change so that we can include people who used to fish halibut.

Thank you,



Danny Keeler, F/V Dominion and F/V My Girl

August 20, 2008

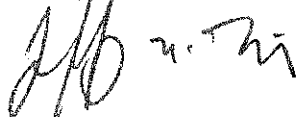
Mr. Donald K. Hansen  
Chairman  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
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Dear Chairman Hansen,

My name is Jeff Miles. I am a second generation fisherman out of Port Orford, where I've fished for more than 30 years. When the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) went into effect, it took me out of the 2A Halibut fishery. When I sablefish out of our area, I encounter a large amount of halibut bycatch.

It is time to change the halibut fishery to include an option for halibut bycatch retention in the sablefish fishery. Please make this change so that we can include people who used to fish halibut.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Miles". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jeff Miles, F/V Top Gun