

October 25, 2014

Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Pl., Suite 101  
Portland Oregon 97220-1384

Madame Chair and Council,

I would like to express my concerns about the ITQ fishery in the Point Conception area, primarily the sablefish fishery. I have been fishing fixed gear for sablefish in the Point Conception area since 2009. In the past two years we have seen an influx of ITQ boats in our area. These large, company owned boats come down from the Pacific Northwest and take large quantities of fish out of a relatively small area in a short amount of time. These boats generally show up in our area in the fall when the fish are schooled together to spawn. The use of grading rings on their pots assures they catch the larger, more valuable, fish. Unfortunately these larger fish are the breeding population that produces the most spawn. I do not believe this practice is sustainable for the fishery and fear that if it continues the stock will not be healthy enough to be harvested.

Another problem we are having is a conflict with their gear. In the past the boats have stayed a good distance from our traditional fishing areas, this year these boats have been fishing very aggressively following local boats around and setting miles of pot gear on our traditional areas, rendering these areas unfishable or blocked to the local fleet. This gear is often left for days at a time unattended. Left unattended, there is virtually no way for us to know how much or exactly where there gear is. This poses a potentially dangerous situation for our vessels and crew. Entanglement with opposing gear could result in injury to crew, mechanical breakdown of the hauler or, at the least, loss of gear. I am asking the Coast Guard representative to take this complaint regarding our safety seriously and explore possible solutions to alleviate this issue that the ITQ fishery has imposed on us.

Thank You,  
Jason Robinson  
F/V Miss Conception