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August 20, 2010

Mr. Mark Cedergreen, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Cedergreen:

I am writing on behalf of the Port Orford Ocean Resource Team to ask the Council to consider modifications to the commercial 2A Pacific halibut 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 sablefish hook and line fishery – consistent with the Council’s mandate to reduce bycatch. The information provided by National Marine Fisheries Service estimating halibut discard mortality for the hook and line sablefish fishery provides valuable documentation that the hook and line sablefish fishery discards halibut throughout the year. Meanwhile we set thousands of hooks this year during the 10 hour directed halibut fishery and hoped to hit the right spot at the right time to find some fish. And we dumped all of the halibut we caught in 2010 on the market in one day—guaranteeing a low price to all fishermen.

We encourage the Council to consider management options that allow fishermen to retain halibut as bycatch in the hook and line sablefish fishery. Halibut is a valuable resource—it is ridiculous to discard it year round, and manage the fishery with a 10 hour derby.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leesa Cobb".

Leesa Cobb, Executive Director