



CALIFORNIA WETFISH PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1951 • Buellton, CA 93427 • Office: (805) 693-5430 • Mobile: (805) 350-3231 • Fax: (805) 686-9312 • www.californiawetfish.org

October 7, 2013

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Chair
And Members of the Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place #200
Portland OR 97220-1384

RE: Agenda Item E.4.c Methods Review Topics

Dear Ms. Lowman and Council members,

The California Wetfish Producers Association (CWPA) represents the majority of coastal pelagic species 'wetfish' fishermen and processors in California. On behalf of California's wetfish industry, we ask the Council for your support of the collaborative research program that we have initiated in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, whose goal is to develop an index of relative abundance for sardine, and potentially other CPS (i.e. anchovy) by modifying existing aerial survey methods, coupled with the traditional spotter pilot index, to produce information of critical importance to improve sardine biomass estimates and trends in abundance.

As we have testified in the past, and as is noted in the Proposal for Method Review submitted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Agenda Item E.4. **Proposal for Methodology Review of the Southern California Bight Aerial Survey for Inclusion into the Pacific Sardine Stock Assessment**) Pacific sardines and anchovy are important species in the CPS management complex. In addition to their importance as forage, these species are also very important to the CPS 'wetfish' industry and California's fishing economy.

Effective assessment of nearshore sardine abundance, an important potential measure of recruitment, is currently missing from stock assessments. Providing an index of abundance in California, including the nearshore as well as offshore, is needed to forecast population trends. By partnering with CDFW, CWPA hopes to advance the state of knowledge of sardine and other CPS. We believe the method developed by CDFW scientists, blending the traditional spotter pilot index with new technology developed in the Northwest aerial Sardine Survey, is a positive step toward restoring an important index of abundance that could potentially serve as a recruitment index in the future. We would greatly appreciate the Council's approval of this survey proposal for inclusion in the Methods Review planned for early 2014.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Diane Pleschner-Steele
Executive Director

