



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

October 10, 2013

The Honorable Jaime Herrera-Beutler
United States House of Representatives
1130 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Requested Pacific Fishery Management Council Comment on H.R. 2646 and S. 1275, the Revitalizing the Economy of Fisheries (REFI) in the Pacific Act of 2013

Dear Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler:

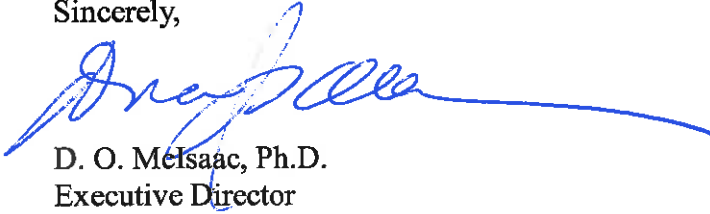
Thank you for your request for Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) comments on H.R. 2646 and S. 1275, the Revitalizing the Economy of Fisheries (REFI) in the Pacific Act of 2013. The Pacific Council considered its Legislative Committee recommendations, took public comment on both bills, and has taken the position of being highly supportive of efforts to ease the financial burden to groundfish fishermen through refinancing the existing loan funding the limited entry trawl fishery buyback under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Fishing Capacity Reduction Program. The Pacific Council asks that you consider this position and the following comments.

The Pacific Council notes that West Coast fishermen have made substantial sacrifices to maintain and rebuild fish stocks while restructuring and rationalizing groundfish trawl fisheries. The limited entry trawl fishery has recently been transformed into an individual quota program, which is having beneficial outcomes for both conservation of the resource and the associated fishery communities. However, this program also imposes significant added observer and cost recovery expenses on the fishermen. Absent relief such as described in these bills, economic casualties in the fishery are feared. Together with the financial terms of the decade-old vessel buy-back loan, the cost of operating in this fishery is overly burdensome.

The Pacific Council supports provisions that cap the debt obligation paid by fishermen at 3 percent of exvessel revenue and that extend the term of the loan to 45 years. The Pacific Council also supports the proposed interest rate, which is "the percent the Secretary must pay as interest to borrow from the Treasury the funds to make the loan."

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. The Pacific Council appreciates your dedication to West Coast fisheries and the communities that depend on them. Should your staff have any questions about the enclosed report or require additional information, please have them contact me or Ms. Jennifer Gilden at 503-820-2280.

Sincerely,



D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

DOM:csp

- c: Pacific Fishery Management Council Members
 - Mr. Randy Fisher, Executive Director, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
 - Mr. Chuck Tracy, Deputy Director, Pacific Council
 - Ms. Kelly Ames, Staff Officer, Pacific Council
 - Mr. John DeVore, Staff Officer, Pacific Council
 - Mr. Jim Seger, Staff Officer, Pacific Council
 - Mr. David Whaley, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives
 - Mr. Peter Modaff, Jr., Legislative Director, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
 - Mr. Chad Ramey, Legislative Director, Office of Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler
 - Mr. Will Stelle, NMFS Regional Administrator, WCR
 - Groundfish Advisory Subpanel Members
 - Groundfish Management Team Members