



Monterey Fish Company, Inc.

1222 Merrill Street / Salinas, CA 93901 / 831-422-9407 / Fax: 831-755-1924

E3

Mr. James Lone, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
2130 SW 5th Avenue, Suite 244
Portland, OR 97201

Dear Chairman Lone & Council Members:

I am the vice-president of Monterey Fish Company Inc., based in Salinas, California. Monterey Fish Company is a third-generation family-owned and run seafood packing company originally established in 1941. We have a state-of-the-art cannery in Salinas, that employs 400 employees. Monterey Fish Company, Inc. also own and fish two boats in both the sardine and squid fisheries. We have made, and continue to make, significant investments in the sardine fishery that benefit our community as well as the State of California. I also serve as a processor representative on the Council's Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Advisory Subpanel.

I am writing this letter to voice concerns for the future of our very important sardine fishery in California.

As you know, the CPS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) implemented a limited-entry program south of Pt Arena, California. Originally, we had to qualify for limited entry fishing permits and the qualifications were set up so as to restrict the fishery to approximately 70 boats. I am aware that members of the Council favored a smaller fleet, specifically 41 boats. Forty-one boats are not sufficient to successfully support the industry. In addition, we must be able to upgrade the boats that we have. First to make them safe and secondly to assure the quality of sardines by being able to carry a significant amount of chilled seawater along with the fish. Now the Council has directed the CPS Management Team to go back and reevaluate the goals of the finfish limited entry fishery.

With all of this unsettled, here comes a fishery in Oregon and Washington, where fishing permits are not federally regulated. Due to a sizeable demand in Japan for large sardines, the processing and fishing capacity in Oregon and Washington may triple within the next two years. Additional boats could be added through the state programs, which could lead to substantial fishing pressure in both of these states. Currently there is a sardine allocation set in the FMP that allows two-thirds of the harvest guideline for the south (Pt Pedras Blancas, California to the Mexican border) and one-third for the north (north of Pt Pedras Blancas to the Canadian border, including Oregon and Washington). For 2001,

Packers and Exporters of Fresh - Frozen - Canned Seafoods

SEAWAVE®

BONO®

SURFKING®



Monterey Fish Company, Inc.

1222 Merrill Street / Salinas, CA 93901 / 831-422-9407 / Fax: 831-755-1924

the 134,737 metric ton harvest guideline would be allocated 44,912 metric tons to the north, and 89,824 metric tons to the south. This allocation could preclude historic Monterey fishermen and processors from participating in this important fishery. It is entirely possible that Oregon and Washington could harvest significant amounts of sardine during their season (typically June/July through August/ September). The main fishing season in Monterey begins in August and continues through February. However, due to inclement weather, January and February are generally not productive months.

Those of us who are major participants in this fishery are having a hard time understanding the current management process and the thinking behind it. Those of us who rejuvenated and developed the current fishery were forced into a federally controlled limited entry program. There is a federal, coast-wide quota with a set number of boats. If CDFG has their way, this number of boats will be further reduced, with no transferability of permits or upgrades on boats after December 31st, 2000. Managers claim this situation will only prevail until this yet-to-be-determined "goal" is reached. Now, here comes Oregon and Washington with a seemingly "open access" fishery. They are fishing off the same coast-wide federal quota, but they are being encouraged to develop their fishery while we in the south are being controlled by increasingly strict regulations.

While we in no way want to preclude Oregon and Washington from developing successful fisheries, we believe it is imperative to develop a sufficient long-range plan that will address *all* of the users concerns. This may mean developing a separate quota for the northern states to be allocated in years when the biomass is over a specific threshold.

As I stated above, we have invested a significant amount of money developing this fishery and we need some further assurances of its stability. For the 2001 fishery we recommend that the current "two-thirds / one-third" allocation be abolished, and that a coast-wide quota be implemented. This, in itself, will prevent user conflicts for the upcoming year. However, we do not feel this is the ultimate solution. We should begin work now on how best to address these critical issues and potential user conflicts for the following years.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sal Tringali
Vice President
Monterey Fish Company, Inc