

## **PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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February 1, 2002

Dr. Bruce Leaman, Director  
International Pacific Halibut Commission  
PO Box 95009  
Seattle, WA 98145-2009

Dear Bruce:

Let me begin by complimenting you on another excellently run annual meeting. The meeting materials were obviously prepared under high quality standards, your staff were very professional and helpful, and the meeting in general showed considerable attention to the details that display quality. Also, we appreciated your reservation of a breakout room during the week for use by groups such as our Area 2A delegation.

The primary purpose of this letter is to express concern about the confusion surrounding the estimate of bycatch mortality for Area 2A and the impacts this confusion had to the 2002 allowable catch. It is now apparent the basis for this problem was in the area of communication, as opposed to a serious analytical or policy dispute. We would like to take this early opportunity to do what is possible to eliminate any chance of repeating this problem next year. Please consider the content of this letter in its intended spirit of constructively improving communication.

We came to the annual meeting with the strong expectation the bycatch mortality estimate for Area 2A was 220,000 pounds. On the first day of the meeting, we were quite surprised to see 540,000 pounds listed in the Commission technical documents as the deduction from the allowable catch in 2002, and the bycatch estimates from the previous 6 years had been revised. Advance calls to the Commission office about possible Area 2A issues and expectations resulted in no mention of this significant discrepancy between what was forwarded to the Commission office last fall and what would be used as the basis of deliberations at the annual meeting. Even a coordination conference call the week before the meeting between many of the Area 2A delegation participants yielded no indication of what we saw on the first day of the meeting. We found ourselves quite suddenly in a reactive mode on an important issue. As you know, we left the meeting with a total allowable catch 320,000 pounds less than what we expected when we arrived at the meeting.

The impacts of a loss of 320,000 pounds to our small allowable catch are significant. In numerical terms, it would have increased the yield limit 24% over the amount now to be allocated between the Area 2A sectors. As an example of importance, Oregon sport charters now receive \$150 from anglers for the chance to catch an average 25 pound net weight dressed halibut.

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We will attempt to do several things to try to prevent re-occurrence of this problem next year. I have attached a letter to Dr. Usha Varanasi suggesting several measures to improve communication on the transmittal of information used to develop the allowable catch for Area 2A.

From your perspective, we simply ask you and your staff be aware of our concern and communicate directly with us should any such problems develop in the future. In the instance there is a discrepancy that develops between what is transmitted to the Commission and what will be used at the annual meeting, please alert both me and the southern U.S. principal involved of the situation. Using the communication vehicles available at the Pacific Council office, I will be able to notify the other members of the southern U.S. delegation. Hopefully, we will have the opportunity for a timely response.

Should you have any questions on our request or intent in this matter, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box containing a white handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Don Bodenmiller".

Executive Director

DOM:kla

Enclosure

c: Mr. Bob Alverson  
Mr. Phil Anderson  
Mr. Jim Balsiger  
Mr. Don Bodenmiller  
Mr. Burnie Bohn  
Ms. Yvonne de Reynier  
Mr. Ralph Hoard  
Mr. Steve Joner  
Mr. Jim Lone  
Dr. Rick Methot  
Mr. Mel Moon  
Mr. Bill Robinson  
Ms. Michele Robinson  
Dr. Usha Varanasi  
Mr. John Wallace