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INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIRECTOR
BRUCE M. LEAMAN

P.O. BOX 85009
SEATTLE, WA 98148-2009

TELEPHONE
(206) 834-1839

FAX:
(206) 832-2883

March 26, 2004

Dr. Don McIssac, Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

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Re: Agenda item C.10

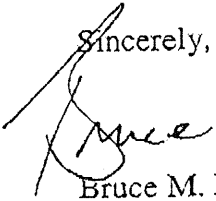
PFMC

Dear Don:

The staff of the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) would like to offer its support for the adoption and use of selective flatfish trawls. These types of trawls have been designed to reduce the bycatch of certain rockfish species during flatfish fishing, but have also shown promising results in reducing halibut bycatch. Research by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on selective flatfish trawls has demonstrated significant reductions in bycatch of Pacific halibut: 29% lower on the shelf and 46% on the slope, while having only small impact on the target catch. Reductions in halibut bycatch will result in higher catch limits for treaty and non-treaty commercial halibut fishermen, and recreational halibut anglers. For these reasons, we encourage the Council to consider this type of trawl as it refines management measures for 2005 and beyond.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Bruce M. Leaman
Executive Director

cc: IPHC Commissioners