

**WESTERN FISHBOAT
OWNERS ASSOCIATION®**



P.O. Box 138
Eureka, CA 95502

Ph. (707) 443-1098
Fax (707) 443-1074

e-mail <wfoa@cox.net>
website: <<http://www.wfoa-tuna.org>>

August 18, 2004

Mr. Jimmy Story
OES / OMC , Room # 7820
U.S. Dept. of State
Washington, DC 20502

Re: U.S. Canada Albacore Treaty

Dear Jimmy:

As we have discussed in the past with the State Department, there continues to be crowding on the fishing grounds in the North Pacific U.S. EEZ by Canadian vessels, problems concerning the markings on vessels, and differences over the definition of albacore troll vessels under the Treaty. A number of U.S. vessels have also reported a generally arrogant and intimidating attitude by a number of the Canadian albacore vessels, that was not the case in the past. I have asked WFOA members to document this activity and I should have a report on it at the end of this summer season. There have also been questions raised concerning Canadian port access by U.S. troll vessels.

Additionally, there is talk of capacity reduction through limited entry or other methods from NGO's working within the Federal Council system under the Magnuson Act, and the recently published NOAA-NMFS United States National Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity . The PFMC already is doing preliminary work on a limited entry plan for HMS longline fisheries. Thus, we expect an effort to be made to limit the U.S. troll albacore fleet within a reasonably short period of time. Without an understanding of the crucial impact that international cooperation has on the albacore fisheries in the North Pacific, which should include a clear understanding of the operation and responsibilities of the Canadian fleet under the Treaty, we fear the PFMC might make the decision to take unilateral action to reduce the capacity of the U.S. fleet, regardless of the consequences for that fleet given international competition.

For this and other reasons we are encouraged that for the first time in many years a representative of the State Department will be attending the September meeting of the PFMC in San Diego. We would greatly appreciate, and think it would be very constructive, to meet briefly with you before that meeting, possibly when you first arrive in San Diego. Would it be possible to make such arrangements with you?

Sincerely,

Wayne Heikkila
Executive Director

cc: Rebecca Lent - NMFS
Svein Fougner - NMFS
Gary Sakagawa - NOAA/NMFS
Don McIsaac - Pacific Fisheries Management Council
Louis Hill - WFOA President
John LaGrange - AFRF President
Peter Flournoy - WFOA/AFRF Counsel
Dr. Vidar Wespestad - AFRF scientific advisor

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Mr. Bill Gibbons-Fly
OES / OMC , Room # 7820
U.S. Dept. of State
Washington, DC 20502

August 17, 2004

Re: Northern Committee / CWPFC

Dear Bill:

Thank you for the response to our letter of July 9, 2004 in which WFOA expressed our concerns with regard to international management of Northern Albacore. Just to followup with a few other thoughts on developing issues affecting the U.S. troll fleet, I have listed them below.

As you are aware, out of the approximate 120,000 mt of albacore landed in the North Pacific above 30°N latitude, the U.S. lands about 12% to 15%, the Japanese land about 65%, and the balance from other Asian nations . (Canada lands only about 1.5% of which 80% is generally caught in U.S. waters). Thus, the two major players are the U.S. and Japan.

So far in 2004 there has been an observed increase in illegal high-seas drifnetting for various species, including albacore, in the region west of the international dateline between latitudes 35°N to 45°N and longitudes 175°E to 165°E. Our member's vessels have documented and filmed this activity and WFOA has relayed the information to the USCG & DHS in Honolulu and Seattle. We are very concerned that many of these vessels fly no flag and have no identifying marks. Also, we would like to find out where and to whom these vessel market their product of which much could be albacore tuna. We believe Japan has the same concerns about IUU fishing and that Japan could be very helpful in using its resources to trace this illegally caught albacore, (just as they have traced the ownership of various Taiwanese purse seiners in the Western Pacific).

As producers of North Pacific albacore we are also troubled by the possibility of Japan and the U.S. not having sufficient input in the management process within the CWPFC, even with the approval of the as yet unstructured Northern Committee. The daily news reports, as well as the discussions on capacity in the meetings in Sapporo, indicate that the Pacific Island Nations are apparently influenced more by short term opportunities, than by the long term economic and biological health of the fishery. It would be unfortunate for a block of countries, that can't seem to get it together themselves in their own backyard, to have such a great impact on a resource which U.S. albacore trollers depend upon, possibly by simple inaction.

Because of these issues mentioned above it becomes increasing important that the two nations catching most of the North Pacific albacore (U.S. & Japan), and doing much of the research on this stock of fish caught north of 30°N, be able to get together soon to have a dialog on the issues --- the health of the albacore fishery, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the North Pacific for albacore, and a

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strategy for the Northern Committee and its influence over North Pacific albacore. In this context we were wondering if progress has been made to arrange for bilateral albacore discussions with the Japanese in October when they will be on the West Coast.

Sincerely,

Wayne Heikkila
Executive Director

cc: Rebecca Lent - NMFS
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