

Pacific Marine Conservation Council

*Linking science, policy, and community to benefit the marine environment
and the people and livelihoods connected to the sea*

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August 31, 2005

Mr. Donald K. Hansen
Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Re: S.1549

Dear Chairman Hansen,

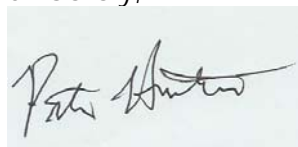
On behalf of the staff and board of directors of Pacific Marine Conservation Council (PMCC), I am writing to strongly encourage the Pacific Fishery Management Council to reiterate Council support for full and inclusive public process in the development of systems of dedicated access privileges. We are particularly disturbed at the introduction by Senator Gordon Smith (R-Oregon) of S.1549, which would establish an individual fishing quota system, coupled with a processor quota system, for a sector of the Pacific whiting fishery. This legislation would deliberately bypass aspects of both the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

PMCC has not hesitated to criticize Council's development of an IFQ system for the groundfish trawl fishery. Nonetheless, we very much appreciate the opportunities the Council provides for consideration of our views. We also value the analysis and accountability offered by NEPA.

In a June 23 letter to Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, the Council's executive director Dr. Donald McIsaac stated, "the Pacific Council opposes any Congressional action pre-empting the cooperative process and progress made to date or otherwise usurping in any fashion the Pacific Council's development of an IFQ program via a comprehensive EIS." Even though PMCC argued against going forward with this EIS, we fully support the Council's preference for this process over a Congressional action that would impose major changes to a regional fishery.

Please make it clear that S.1549 is not a welcome addition to west coast fisheries management.

Sincerely,



Peter Huhtala
Senior Policy Director
Pacific Marine Conservation Council