

**August 23, 2005**

**Mr. John DeVore  
Groundfish Staff Officer  
Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384**

**Dear Mr. DeVore:**

I am writing on behalf of myself, friends and acquaintances that are concerned with the current rule regarding the retention of groundfish, except sablefish, with a halibut onboard during those days open to all-depth Pacific halibut fishing. We feel that this rule is too restrictive for small <40 fathom boaters with incidental catches of halibut.

I have worked on a commercial troller for salmon, crabs and tuna during 1974 and 1975 in Coos Bay, Oregon. Since that time I have sport fished on my own small boat predominantly out of my home port of Tillamook. These fishing trips were within 40 fathoms and five or six miles north or south. My daughter's largest fish was a 34" halibut she caught just outside Tillamook Bay prior to the time a halibut tag was required. Since then, I have attended halibut meetings and was elated when the 30 fathom (at that time) inside fishery was developed to permit the continuation of the incidental catches of halibut for the fishermen that did not (wisely) venture far off shore in a small craft.

I do support the work of the council and other groups and individuals that seek to provide a strong fishery. Restricting all harvesting of certain species and limiting catches for others will help assure this. On the other hand, I feel I must speak out against what I see as a too heavy handed and law enforcement oriented approach that chips away at my already low odds of catching that occasional inside 40 fathom halibut. This weeks local newspaper contained the information that the **Oregon Central Coast All-Depth Pacific Halibut Fishery to open Friday through Sundays starting August 12, 2005.**

This means that for three days out of the week the inability of the <40 fathom sport fisherman to retain a halibut along with his lingcod and black sea bass is likely to occur until the end of October. These days are probably the most accessible fishing days to the working recreational boater.

We understand that we now have the ability to catch and retain these inshore halibut but we most always have a lingcod and some black sea bass on board already. We purchase and support the halibut tag system but are now obliged to toss this prize catch back or face the moral dilemma of choosing.

I do not ask to abolish what others have worked hard to do but rather alter the rule to keep the incidental halibut catch a viable opportunity for the inshore fisherman throughout the season.

If the goal is to reduce catch of ground fish when returning from >40 fathom halibut areas, then just restrict those boats with more than one or two halibut on board from taking other ground fish. The largest impact comes from the charter and larger sport boats with more than one or two persons aboard.

In closing, I recommend the council makes changes to the halibut/ground fish retention rule for the 2006 season in order to allow the retention of at least one halibut onboard along with the other ground fish during the all-depth halibut season.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact me at 503-842-5179.

Steve Langer  
13620 Trask River Road  
Tillamook, Oregon 97141

The following are names and locations of individuals that I have spoken with and share my views:

Gary Baker – Bay City  
Mike McKinney – Tillamook  
John Shipman – Tillamook  
Hugo Hatzel – Coos Bay  
Roy Woo – Forest Grove  
David Smith – Coos Bay