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INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY A CONVENTION BETWEEN CANADA

AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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March 28, 2005

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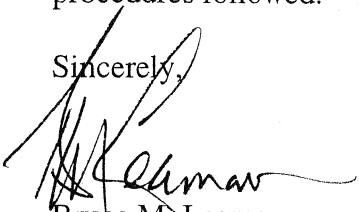
Mr. Stephen P. Reese  
Acting Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
7600 Sand Point Way NE Bldg #1  
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

Dear Mr. Reese:

The International Pacific Halibut Commission staff has reviewed the Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) concerning full retention in the Pacific whiting fishery, endorsed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Based on the bycatch rates observed in 2004, the amount of halibut mortality incurred during this fishery is expected to be low and the Commission supports the initiative for accurate bycatch accounting. This letter authorizes the National Marine Fisheries Service to permit retention, until offloading, of Pacific halibut captured and retained by those trawl vessels participating in the program covered by this EFP during 2005. We assume the vessels and processors receiving the prohibited species must comply with all applicable record keeping and recording requirements for prohibited species landings. The Commission would appreciate receiving an evaluation of this project for the 2004 calendar year and the entire project, upon completion.

Your letter did not indicate the ultimate means of disposal for halibut retained under this permit. Whether the fish are donated for charitable purposes under the provisions of federal regulations, or reduced to fish meal, we would be grateful for information on the procedures followed.

Sincerely,

  
Bruce M. Leaman  
Executive Director

cc: IPHC Commissioners  
Dr. D. O. McIsaac