

*The following public comment is representative of four copies sent to the Council via email:*

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Mr. Donald McIsaac  
Executive Director  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
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Dear Mr. McIsaac:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposal before the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) to reestablish a longline fishery in U.S. Pacific waters, reversing protection measures in place for sea turtles and other marine species. Scientists have warned the critically endangered leatherback sea turtle, could go extinct in the Pacific in the next 5-30 years unless efforts to reduce the threat of being injured or killed by longlines and gillnets are reversed.

The PFMC made the right decision in 2004 when it prohibited the use of longline gear in U.S. West Coast waters. As a result for the past two years leatherback sea turtles have been safe from the threat of longlining in U.S. waters off the Pacific Coast.

There is not sufficient justification to develop and expand a pelagic longline fishery in U.S. Pacific waters. If approved by the Council, the proposal to allow pelagic longline gear through an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) will undermine successful conservation measures protecting the critically endangered leatherback sea turtle as well as billfish, seabirds, marine mammals, sharks and other fish,

Finally, allowing longliners back into our waters if they use circle hooks would also be a set back to essential conservation measures. The recent closure of the Hawaii swordfish longline fishery has provided conclusive evidence that circle hooks fail to prevent the "take" of endangered sea turtles. This confirms the only option left is a closure of longline fishing in the Pacific to prevent the threat to these endangered species. I urge you not to reverse your decision. I look forward to your reply on this issue.

Sincerely,

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