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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 26, 2008

Mr. Frank D. Lockhart
Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
7600 Sand Point Way NE Bldg #1
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

RECEIVED

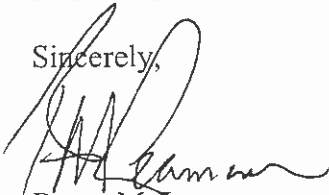
MAR 31 2008

PFMC

Dear Mr. Lockhart:

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 2007, 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 2008. 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 2008 calendar year and the entire project, upon completion.

Sincerely,



Bruce M. Leaman
Executive Director

cc: IPHC Commissioners
Dr. D. O. McIsaac