

To the Pacific Fishery Management Council, Chairman and esteemed others.

I am here before you today because I am one of the LUCKY (yet un-lucky) ones. I can come to your meeting, and voice the concerns of many, as unfortunately, I am unable to fish the great waters of Washington that I have for over 40 years.

I am the owner/operator of a 75 foot dragger fishing vessel the Windjammer. My father built this boat in 1968 this vessel was one of many that my father owned and operated from the mid 1950s . I became the owner in 1990.

Here you are making decisions for Quotas and solutions for an Industry that perhaps you only understand slightly, what about those of us who have managed and maintained the ground fish for all of these years.

How do you decide, who gives you the data to make your decisions, how can you really understand what a standard fishing vessel should be allowed to fish, to have an equitable fishing trip.

Have you personally fished the waters for the many years myself and others have?

Do you really understand the financial obligations that are required of us as well as the personal toll we take for the industry, to preserve our heritage, our family obligations to continue what we have known our entire lives? Do you understand the costs that come with owning and operating a fishing vessel?

The required help

The proper licensing

The outrageous fuel costs per trip

The extra taxes we are all paying for each and every trip

*JUST EXPENSES IN GENERAL*

The buy back taxes that I have incurred as I chose not to take part in the program because it was promised to be a positive and more equitable outcome. Unfortunately, this I now regret as my family and I are suffering with the new restrictions, our savings being depleted, as well the personal sacrifices which include my recent health issues. Do you realize the valuable time we gave up with our families, the birthdays, the anniversaries, the many holiday celebrations all in order to make a living, and to provide the product for your tables?

Do you realize that my family and others who combined have fished these waters using our ancestral experience, our family heritage our commitment to the proper trawling techniques that our ancestors from Norway, as well as other countries those who know how to fish properly, how to maintain the continued re-growth of the fish, preserving the fish for years to come.

How can a government agency determine what or who should fish, how does an agency develop the data that determines the quotas, what vessel can fish, and how many permits can be sold, Who is here to support us when the buy back isn't working for all, how the many economic changes that dictate who can afford the licenses, permits My Washington State permit number is 142, and the Federal government is 54, does this tell you anything? Do realize the number of independent owner/operators are going out of business because of these changes that our government agencies decide what is best for us? Do we have data that shows how many processors now own the licenses and permits now they are able to eliminate the middle man, me the fisherman, the family of these dedicated, hardworking individuals who have given their heart and soul the native who knows what to do in order to preserve this industry that means the most to them?

Are we to become another industry subsidized by the government **being paid to not produce their product**? And here are the fishermen who are not supported, we don't want to be another statistic, we don't want to be a Ward of the Government, but how can we survive when the decisions that effect us the most are made by agencies who really don't know what the bottom line is in order to make a living?

What will fix the problem, we don't need a quick fix for something that needs so much more. Our ancestry that understood the industry, has nurtured the re-growth. We need a solution that will be long standing something that will be more than just the band aid for an injury that needs stitches. No more instant quick fixes that will bring about regret years later, that will only make us obsolete no more little guy. We do not want to become a sign of times past, the fishing industry should not end up like the fuel industry whose main objective is the filling of pockets for a few, destroying the dreams of many to become a statistic. We the fishing vessels understand what needs to be done, we need the waters to fish in the freedom to fish for species that can produce and re-produce for our families and the generations to come.

I can only presume that you see this man who has the time to come before you, is lucky to be able to come and speak before you. I am the un-lucky one as I am unable to fish, using my many years experience who knows and wants to continue to fish, and continue to promote the growth and preserve the species that we fish. I am the man who is living a sedentary lifestyle who wants these changes to come for the good of all and support the few who are dedicated to providing the food for our families as well as yours.

We must have your support.

We have to fix this problem, please do not offer us the quick fix.

Help us plan for the future that is going to be good for all, not just for the processors who decide what the cost should be, or the government agency that does not understand how or why they limit or give us quotas **that are not relevant to the times.**

Eliminate the buy back incentives that only promote our vessels to not fish, what happens to them years later, how does this process allow new permits, new licenses that will promote them fishing our waters and steal our livelihood.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

Thank you for your time in hearing my voice, the voice of many who are unable to attend this meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council .



OMAR ALLINSON  
MISS LEONA INC.  
624 VAN WYCK ROAD  
BELLINGHAM, WA 98226

September 5, 2008

Mr. Donald K. Hansen  
Chairman  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Hansen:

I am the owner and operator of the F/V MISS LEONA, a vessel which I have operated in the West Coast trawl fisheries for many years.


I am writing because of my concern for what is happening to independent small operators such as myself in the West Coast trawl fisheries. Over the years, I have made extensive investments in gear and machinery, including after the Pacific Coast ground fish buyback program. I elected not to submit a bid in the buyback program. Instead, I have continued to actively operate the MISS LEONA. However, the buyback has not created opportunities for me.

Especially since the buyback, I have had to fight to make a living in the fishery. I have survived only with enormous expenditures of time and money. I have worked 12 hours a day 7 days a week, and averaged 6 hours sleep a night during long stretches of time. Because of the amount of work, I cannot attend the September Council meeting without losing more money.

I have been working at a loss in this fishery for over two years. Recently, many independent fishermen have sold out to investors. Only by struggling and fighting are the individual operators such as myself able to stay in business. The communities are losing out as well.

I respectfully ask the Council to keep in mind the long-time individual fishermen, who are having to struggle so much now to survive. Please insure that measures which you adopt will preserve our participation in the fisheries.

Sincerely,

  
Omar Allinson  
Owner, F/V MISS LEONA



## STATEMENT OF STEVE AARVIK

My name is Steve Aarvik. I am the owner of the fishing vessel WINDJAMMER. I have been fishing in the West Coast trawl fisheries with the WINDJAMMER since 19\_\_\_\_.

In 2003, when the Pacific Coast groundfish buyback program came in, I decided to continue to fish the WINDJAMMER and not to submit a bid to have my vessel bought back. We all understood that the buyback program was designed to reduce the harvesting capacity in the West Coast fisheries and to financially stabilize these fisheries. We all understood that the concept was that there would be fewer boats, and as a result more fish for those of us who elected not to be bought out.

This has not happened. Those of us who remained in the fisheries were lead to believe that in exchange for us paying to buy back the other vessels through landing taxes on our fish, we would get access to more fish. Instead, it is harder and harder to go where the fish are because of a variety of regulations including area restrictions. I believe that the trip limits which apply now are not at all what was intended under the buyback program.

These days, especially with sky-high fuel costs, and limited access to fish, it is very difficult to continue to make a go of the fishery economically.

I ask you to take steps which will keep to the spirit of the buyback program, and allow the vessels which stayed in the West Coast fisheries to truly benefit from that program in the way that it was intended, and to have adequate access to the fisheries resources so that we can continue to make a living.

Thank you for considering my remarks.

#356/aarvik-statement



**WINDJAMMER FISH NORTHWEST INC**

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The Honorable

**RE: Groundfish Buyback Program Debt Relief**

Dear:

My name is Steve Aarvik. I am the owner of the F/V Windjammer. My family has fished for over 55 plus years. I have been the owner/operator of the F/V Windjammer for the last twenty years. I am writing you this letter to offer some insight to why the current Buyback Program Debt Relief is not a equal resolution to the ever changing fishing industry/market. My family and others would be considered natives to the fishing industry, with our many years of dedication to the nurturing as well as protecting the investment for all concerned. Recently after our boat and household savings being exhausted because of the many economical changes, the fishing quotas, the salmon crisis, and recouping from an illness that almost left my family without me, I had to apply and was denied a loan from the Fishing Finance Program. All of these issues combined have forced me and others to contact you and our other esteemed Congress Members, as well as elected officials for some other options for resolution of the ever changing fishing industry.

During these many years my family and other fisherman have been nurturing and preserving the west coast waters. We have been through to many changes in the industry, unfortunately, many of them were to the detriment of my family and others who have depended on the fishing industry for the food on the table as well as their livelihood. The most recent Buyback Debt Relief program, as you are aware will offer financial assistance for once again another fishing industry disaster this has been the second time in three years. (Sacramento 2008 and Klamath 2006). The buy out for these two years combined equaled 232 million in spite of the amount is nothing more than a quick fix, it will not permanently create a solution., knowing full well that another disaster could happen again next year. These programs have not helped some fisherman like myself, these options have not helped us in any way, I have never gotten any money I have yet to see money come my way due to these disasters.

The 2000 Federal Groundfish Buyback Plan that provided 36 million in order the permanently remove fleet capacity, which allowed more opportunity for the remaining fisherman. The 2000 buyback program has yet to show any permanent relief for so many who took this option in 2000. This may have helped to stabilize the ground fish industry is still a shadow of what it used to be.

This buyback opportunity will also cost more in fees, and now with the high fuel prices, the fleet still has to deal with new restrictions of rebuilding over fished areas. Not being able to

fish in the areas my father and I made it possible to make a buck, for instance fishing outside of the 150 fathoms or inside of 60 fathoms different limits for different nets being used.

Those who are currently paying back the 2000 ground fish buy back program, are currently paying into the fund and should not be treated differently than the salmon fishermen. While they were given money we have to pay back a "loan" with an interest rate of 2% higher than the initial load amount, this additional expenditure added to the interest rates of 18 months which was approximately \$3.8 million incurred prior to the buyback fees being instated. These fees are one of the many hindrances we in the industry have to contend with daily in order to be competitive. For instance the continued increase of fuel prices which are now four times higher than the initial calculations were done in 2003. The fish prices are static which doesn't help the situation. The continued upgrading, regular maintenance (more efficient engines, gear boxes, propellers etc.) which helps to make our vessels safe and viable operation in order to be competitive in these difficult times for many of use in the US market today.

In conclusion we need the forgiveness of debt forgiveness program to be equal to all, not just to the current buy back program. As you can see previously in my letter buyback programs are not equal to times past as they will only help to destroy more of the industry that is being stripped. My family, the descendants, the natives who have nurtured, maintained and been committed to the food on your table and others for these many years. Come on give us a break count how many of us are actually left, we the fisherman of the United States of America are crying out for help but our cries are falling on deaf ears. **HEAR WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY!** Please commit to making this and any new buy back program equitable to all concerned not an instant relief but a long term remedy for all of us.

Best Regards,

Steve Aarvik

## WINDJAMMER FISH NORTHWEST INC

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September 8, 2008

The Honorable Mike Thompson  
United State House Of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Thompson:

I am writing to you today as a owner/operator of the fishing vessel Windjammer, I have a long history commercial fishing in Washington waters. Today I have to work harder and make less, I am steadily going backwards, the expenses go up but the limits go down and the prices of the fish stay the same. There has to be away to change these conditions I am not the only company that has this burden on how are we going to make ends meet. I have depleted all of my saving both the company and personal to make sure that the boat is a safe and seaworthy place to work. For about 60 years my family have been buying permits and paying tax. The Windjammer is 75ft. Trawler.

This year the Pacific salmon fisheries will be greatly reduced due to an unexpectedly low number of returning Fall Chinook into the Sacramento River system. A similar event took place in 2006 with very low number of Klamath Chinook returning to spawn.

This sort of naturally occurring event on the Ocean is something that was not fully appreciated in the ground fish fishery for many year, because these fish are long lived and the fishery is supported by many year classes. However, the changing ocean conditions through the 1980's and 1990's have led to repeated recruitment failure for a number of important ground fish species. These recruitment failure resulted in the population of several important species of ground fish to decline to very low levels resulting in a number of species to be declared over fished. These declarations led the Secretary of Commerce to declare the ground fish fishery a disaster in the year 2000. That declaration of disaster continues today.

We in the ground fish trawl fishery decided that something needed to be done to help mitigate our problem and correct this situation. We have developed new fishing gear, established areas closed to fishing, and developed and implemented an Industry Funded

Buy-back program to reduce fishing capacity. Our buy-back program was funded through a loan by the Federal Government and the industry has been repaying this loan since 2004.

The Federal Treasury benefited immediately from this buy-back by collecting 15% capital gain tax on recipients of this money as well as several years of the industry paying 5% of their gross revenue to repay this loan and interest.

As you and other members of Congress begin discussing programs to help the impacted Salmon industry, please keep in mind the ground fish disaster has not gone away. We were not then and have not been since then. Loud in crying for help. We have always felt that we need to deal with what nature throws our way, but when we see other segments of the fishing industry receiving assistance from the Federal Government we would like to be remembered.

If such an assistance package is going to be put together once again in Congress, we are requesting that a provision to forgive the debt obligation that we assumed in 2003. This would ease the impact of the ongoing ground fish disaster and greatly improve the economics of the trawl fishery which is so vital to the small fishing communities along the West Coast.

I feel if something is not done soon to help us we will no longer be able to make ends meet.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

Steve Aarvik  
Windjammer Fish Northwest Inc

To Whom it May Concern;

My name is Steve Aarvik I own and operate a commercial fishing vessel. Recently, the industry that I have made my livelihood has been compromised due to your Marine Sanctuaries as well as your political views in regards to the fishing industry. I would like to explain to you how this industry has survived in Washington state for all of these years, that my family and others have fished. Due to our commitment and willingness to not "over fish" the areas, and allow the continued regeneration of the fish that we predominately fish. My family has incurred 51 years of log books that Washington state has in possession documenting our commitment to the industry we depend on. I grew up in a fishing family and that is all I know, missing the birthdays of my four daughters and special moments and occasions for over 30 years making these sacrifices in order to put clothes on our backs, a roof over our head, food on the table for our families as well as some of yours, I really need your support to allow us to fish and continue to groom the areas that are plentiful to fish. It is depressing and sad to me that my livelihood has been stripped from me and others. I am sure it was not your intention to completely devastate my family and others who have fished the smartest way for many years.

In closing I hope that you will take the time to read my plea and could offer insight as to where I can go, perhaps charter work for Green Peace possibly buying my permits or boat so that we will not be another catastrophe in the making of the industry I have loved and nurtured for these many years. We need your help, thanking you in advance for taking the time to hear me out and hopefully we can work together for a positive outcome for all.

Sincerely,

Steve Aarvik  
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