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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE



Jared Huffman
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, 6TH DISTRICT

CHAIR, Water Parks and Wildlife

COMMITTEES
Natural Resources
Utilities & Commerce
Assembly Budget Committee
Subcommittee No. 3 on
Resources

April 7, 2009

Don Hansen
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97229-1384

Dear Chairman Hansen:

I am pleased that the agenda for the April 9th meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council includes time to consider an exception for the Vessel Monitoring System for deeper near shore rock fishermen operating out of the Port of Bolinas. Andrew Kleinberg, Josh Churchman, and Jeremy Dierks, the only deeper near shore rock fishermen operating out of the Port of Bolinas, are requesting an exemption from the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) requirement for the Port of Bolinas for unique reasons.

These fishermen operate small fishing businesses using rod and reel off 20 foot boats that are moored in a protected marine sanctuary where there is no power source. They must cross federal water in order to fish in allowable state waters near the Farallone Islands. When they travel back to Bolinas, they cross federal waters with fish on board and must have a VMS.

The VMS unit will draw down any battery in a week. The cost to replace batteries coupled with monthly fees and associated costs to maintain the VMS for the several hundred pounds of fish that they are permitted to catch does not make financial sense.

Bolinas fishermen have supplied the local community with rockfish for the last hundred years. While it is important to prevent over-fishing and maintain a good supply of rockfish, we also need to protect small fishing operations like this from going extinct.

The permit restrictions are designed for bigger fishing businesses and should be re-evaluated in this case. Consideration of an exemption, on a case by case basis, for small boats under 25 feet in length that are moored in areas where there is no power source and which must cross federal water to fish in allowable state water seems reasonable. Thank you for considering their request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared Huffman".

JARED HUFFMAN
Assemblymember, 6th District