



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384  
Phone 503-820-2280 | Toll free 866-806-7204 | Fax 503-820-2299 | [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)  
Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

June 22, 2015

The Honorable Jaime Herrera-Beutler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1130 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Requested Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) Comments on the West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act (S. 1143 and H.R. 2168)

Dear Ms. Herrera-Beutler:

Thank you for your request for Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) review and comment on the West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act introduced by Senator Maria Cantwell (S. 1143) and yourself (H.R. 2168). At its June 2015 meeting, the Pacific Council and its Legislative Committee reviewed the matter and the Pacific Council directed me to convey the following comments and strong support for the West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act.

The Pacific Council was established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (MSA), and has voting members from the States of Washington, Oregon, and California, as well as the National Marine Fisheries Service and West Coast Tribes. The MSA requires the Pacific Council to develop conservation and management measures for the fisheries off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. The Dungeness crab fishery is one of the region's most valuable commercial fisheries. However, for over 20 years, Section 112(d) of Public Law 104-297 (16 USC 1856) has delegated authority over the West Coast Dungeness crab fishery to the States of Washington, Oregon, and California. Through the work of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's Coastal Dungeness Crab Tri-State Committee, this very successful collaborative effort has resolved many complex fishery management issues, including over-capacity, and has efficiently developed regulations governing legal retention and season structure. The existing management regime has resulted in a healthy resource and an economically important and sustainable fishery.

The existing delegation of state authority for the West Coast Dungeness crab fishery will sunset on September 30, 2016 in the absence of new legislation. The Pacific Council notes the considerable success of the West Coast states in their management of the Dungeness crab fishery, and is supportive of the West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act and its continuance of the delegation of management authority indefinitely. The loss of the statutory delegation to the West Coast states for Dungeness crab would put the Pacific Council in a position to embark on a multi-year process to develop a fishery management plan (FMP) for Dungeness crab and shift resources away from ongoing fishery management issues. This fishery could become somewhat chaotic during the gap period between the current State authority and

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full Federal authority under the MSA, as occurred in a similar situation off the State of Alaska during the 1990s.

The Pacific Council believes the existing Dungeness crab fishery would be properly managed under the West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act and urges Congress to move forward with H.R. 2168 and S. 1143.

Thank you again for your request for Pacific Council review and comment on the West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act. Should you or your staff have any questions about this letter, please contact me or Ms. Jennifer Gilden, the lead Staff Officer on this matter at 503-820-2280.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. O. McIsaac", written in a cursive style.

D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

JDG:kma

c: Pacific Council Members  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
The Honorable Ron Wyden  
The Honorable Rick Larsen  
The Honorable Derek Kilmer  
The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
The Honorable Kurt Schrader  
The Honorable Rob Bishop  
The Honorable John Thune  
The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
The Honorable Bill Nelson