



CALIFORNIA WETFISH PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

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October 16, 2015

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Chair
And Members of the Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place #200
Portland OR 97220-1384

RE: Agenda Item H.4 Methods Review Topics

Dear Ms. Lowman and Council members,

The California Wetfish Producers Association (CWPA) represents the majority of coastal pelagic species 'wetfish' fishermen and processors in California. On behalf of California's wetfish industry, we ask the Council for your support of our collaborative research program with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, whose goal is to develop an index of relative abundance for sardine and other CPS (i.e. anchovy) by modifying existing aerial survey methods, adapted from the traditional spotter pilot index, to produce information of critical importance to improve sardine / CPS biomass estimates and trends in abundance.

As we have testified in the past, and as is noted in the Proposal for Method Review submitted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Agenda Item H.4. **Proposal for Methodology Review of the Southern California Coastal Pelagic Species Survey for Inclusion into the Pacific Sardine Stock Assessment**), Pacific sardines and other CPS, including anchovy, are important species in the CPS management complex. In addition to their importance as forage, these species are also essential to the CPS 'wetfish' industry and California's fishing economy.

Effective assessment of nearshore sardine/CPS abundance and recruitment is currently missing from stock assessments. Providing an index of abundance in California, including the nearshore as well as offshore, is needed to forecast population trends. By partnering with CDFW, CWPA hopes to advance the state of knowledge of sardine and other CPS. We believe the method developed by CDFW scientists, blending the traditional spotter pilot index with new technology developed in the Northwest aerial Sardine Survey, is a positive step toward restoring an important index of abundance that could potentially serve as a recruitment index in the future. We would greatly appreciate the Council's approval of this survey proposal for inclusion in the Methods Review planned for early 2016.

We also strongly support the request by the CPS Management Team and Advisory Subpanel for a methods review of the Acoustic Trawl Method (ATM), in part to address questions pertaining to assumptions about the catchability Q of 1 currently employed in stock assessment models.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Diane Pleschner-Steele
Executive Director

