

March 2016



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March 3, 2016

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Chair  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
1100 NE Ambassador Place, #101  
Portland, OR 97220

RE: Termination of the planned electronic monitoring project in the HMS swordfish fishery

Dear Chairman Lowman and Council Members,

I'm writing to you to inform you that the Conservancy has recently made the difficult decision to terminate our planned electronic monitoring project in the HMS swordfish fishery. As many of you know, we had planned to conduct a robust and collaborative project that would help inform the cost-effective and successful implementation of electronic monitoring option for this fishery. We were successful in securing Saltonstall-Kennedy funding support for this initiative and were excited to move forward.

However, largely due to the uncertainty currently felt by many in the fishery, an insufficient number of fishermen were willing to commit participating in the project. Though we're disappointed that we won't be able to move forward as planned, we recognize that in order to be successful any effort like this must be done in close collaboration with the fishing industry. We've returned the Saltonstall-Kennedy funding and are happy to report that these funds will be redistributed to other innovative fisheries projects around the country.

We will continue to look for ways to assist in the development of monitoring tools which can support both thriving fishing businesses and the management objectives of the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Sincerely,

Tom Dempsey  
Senior Fisheries Project Director  
The Nature Conservancy  
California Coastal & Marine Program

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Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Chair  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
1100 NE Ambassador Place, #101  
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RE: Agenda Item F.2: Report on Ongoing Exempted Fishing Permits

Dear Chairman Lowman and Council Members,

I am writing to offer the Conservancy's strong support for the continuation and expansion of the collaborative gear research led by the Pflieger Institute of Environmental Research (PIER) under the exempted fishing permit (EFP-PIER) and through existing agreements with the National Marine Fisheries Service and California's Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The deep-set gear innovations currently being explored by the PIER team and industry partners fully supports the Council's efforts to revitalize the West Coast swordfish fishery, reduce reliance upon foreign caught product and stimulate economic growth in the fishing industry. PIER has demonstrated its ability to provide the Council with reliable, high-quality information and we feel that this will prove to be critical for the development of future west coast operations. We are confident that through science, collaboration and sound management decisions the Council will be presented with viable, long-lasting options for moving this fishery forward.

Additionally, as the Council considers inclusion of deep-set buoy gear as an acceptable gear option in the Highly Migratory Species management plan, we suggest that gear research and innovation continue, as the resulting information is critical for increasing selectivity and providing viable options for the fishery.

We appreciate your ongoing support for the important work that PIER and their partners are doing and for your continued efforts to revitalize the west coast swordfish industry off California.

Sincerely,

Tom Dempsey  
Senior Fisheries Project Director  
The Nature Conservancy  
California Coastal & Marine Program