

August 14, 2017

Brett Hearne  
F/V Last Straw  
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Newport, Oregon 97365

Dear PFMC Council Member,

We are writing to the council today concerning the Community Advisory Board's proposal to make a gear switch cutoff date for trawling to pots on Friday evening July 28, 2017. We have been preparing to switch to freezing at sea, pot fishing sable fish and non-whiting ground fish for many months prior to the cutoff date proposal this proposal should not apply to my efforts. We have been in the process of converting to a pot fish operation during the time that the option to pot fish or trawl were still open. Our fishing vessel was granted a license to freeze at sea in on March 16, 2012. I have been anticipating and working toward pot fishing sable fish since that time.

F/V Last Straw has been trawling this year from March until July 25<sup>th</sup>. We scheduled a shipyard to convert the boat to pot fishing in June and arrived at Yaquina Boat works on July 26<sup>th</sup>. We plan to continue trawling after pot fishing

We became very alarmed and concerned when we heard of a proposed cut-off date of July 28,2017 as our investment was already huge and the boat already in a state of change, such that it was far from operational now.

At this point we had already acquired gear and equipment for the year, scheduled a shipyard and even been granted an Electronic Monitoring Fishing Permit on July 10<sup>th</sup> from National Marine Fisheries.

The reasons for our gear switch is three fold:

- Price for sable fish is at a record high
- Price for ground fish is at a record low
- Processing capacity of fish is at a record low.

Fish stocks are getting rebuilt and we all want the fish to come in. In 2017 prices are ripe for fixed gear sable fish. Markets are not so ripe for trawl caught fish. Next year might be a different story. We are looking for ways to innovate and produce product ~ key words when rationalization was drawn up.

Rock fish is selling as low as 10 cents a lb. Verses 50 cents a lb. last year. There has been a slight increase for ling cod and a slight decrease for petrale.

Concerning processing capacity at shore side, Pacific Seafood cuts in Eureka. Hallmark cuts in Charleston. Pacific Shrimp can cut in Newport but they are concentrating on Whiting this summer. Pac Choice cuts in Astoria and Bornstein's cuts in Astoria .That is a whopping five plants coast wide. Their production is limited by a severe lack of available labor force.

So with these three options we have species getting rebuilt, markets red hot for sable, markets not so hot for for trawl. You simply can't get the fish out of the ocean if no one wants to buy it.

Next year might be a different story. Sable price down and Dover up. Or one more plant might be disabled or close.

The Last Straw to be able to switch and innovate to operate. These were key words when rationalization was drawn up.

Once again we worked on freezing equipment for years. We have purchased equipment and gear for about a year. Obtained an EFP for electronic monitoring received July 10<sup>th</sup> 2017. We plan to do lots of trawling in the fall. The CAB proposal to make gear switching cut off on July 28<sup>th</sup> should not apply to the Last Straw

Respectfully,

Brett and Eileen Hearne