

BAY FRESH SEAFOODS
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August 17, 2018

Attn: Pacific Fishery Management Council,

I am writing this letter to voice my concern about the economic impact on the fishing industry and communities on our California coast. I have had my business Bay Fresh Seafoods for 26 years in Moss Landing, a central coast port. I buy directly from the commercial fishing boats and wholesale to fish markets and other seafood suppliers. Since I opened my business I have lost over two thirds of the yearly seafood that once came across my dock. The reasons for this decline are lower catch quotas, trawler buy backs, and marine protected areas this is just to name a few. This is why 90% of our seafood is imported from other countries. About half of this is farmed fish and does not have stringent quality controls in place. U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross stated and I quote "the annual seafood trade deficit is more than \$14 billion in U.S.D."

My business and other businesses are struggling to stay afloat because of federal regulations put forth by National Marine Fisheries. These regulations can change six to eight times a year. How can a business operate under these circumstances? As an owner you don't know whether to hire people or lay them off, buy new equipment or make do with the old. The fishermen that depend on fishing for their livelihood doesn't have enough quotas to keep fishing. These fishermen can't get other jobs they are in their 50's & 60's and don't know any other kind of work. Plus there are no youth learning the field because there is no future for them in the fishing industry as it stands right now.

The boats that fish for me all have at least two deckhands besides the captain. All these men and women have families that live in our coastal communities. There are many fishing communities that are facing the same economic problems. By ignoring this situation that is happening with the fishing industry we are allowing our communities to suffer.

This not only hurts our industry it adversely affects our local businesses such as fish buyers, ice plants, fuel docks, boat dry docks, grocery stores, restaurants and many more which all depend on the fishermen and boat workers to boost their sales. In this economy every sale is important and needed as we all know.

We have been jumping through hoops for the Pacific Fisheries Council and National Marine Fisheries for 25 years so we could get our fisheries back. Well our fisheries are back 100% according to their science, with the exception of a few species. If the agenda is to shut us down, please let me know and I will close my doors and send my employees home before I waste any more money. It seems as though the regulators are being led by large environmental groups. I ask you who is running the fishing industry the government or the environmentalist?

If something isn't done soon I fear there will be no commercial fishing fleet left not only in the Monterey Bay Port's but on the whole west coast. We need to sit down and find a middle ground in which our fishermen can make a living to support their families and our communities as well as respecting our ocean and its resources. We need investigation in the so called "Science" behind all the closed zones and marine protected areas, the very low quotas the fishermen are given and the catch shares. Investigations are happening on the east coast by Senators, Congressmen and Governors as well as the east coast fishing industry, all of which have the same concerns. I am not the only one that doesn't believe managing an industry means shutting it down, which is what is happening!

We only want our elected officials to hear us, see the urgency in our situation and take action. We are struggling to hold on to our businesses and keep people employed. Does anybody care, is anyone listening? We only ask that you do what you were elected to do "stand up for the people" not governmental regulations that are sending the country into a downward spiral and taking our industry with it.

Sincerely,

Roger Whitney, Owner
Bay Fresh Seafoods

Cc: President Trump
Cc: Wilbur Ross, Head of Commerce
Cc: Chris Oliver, Head of NMFS
Cc: Chuck Bonham, California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Director
Cc: Barry Thom, Regional Administrator, West Coast Region NMFS
Cc: Robyn Thorson, USFWS Pacific Region Director, U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Cc: David Crabbe, Vice Chair