



STATEMENT BY SCOTT GODES, VICE PRESIDENT, AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION

AMENDMENT 17: LIVE BAIT FISHERY ALLOWANCE

Chairman Anderson, Vice Chairman Gorelnik and Members of the Pacific Fishery Management Council:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on the proposed amendment to the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Plan regarding the management of live bait and specifically Pacific Sardines.

I'm here representing the 900-member companies of the American Sportfishing Association (ASA). ASA is the trade association that represents every type of sportfishing tackle manufacturer (rods, reels, lures, apparel, etc.), retailers, the sportfishing media and angler groups. I am also making comments today at the request of the California Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA).

I grew up fishing in the ocean off Southern California and have returned many times as an angler since moving to the Washington D.C. area after graduate school. In the US, some aspects of recreational fishing are universal. The sport provides youth and families with good, clean recreation in the outdoors. Saltwater sportfishing instills a love and appreciation of the sea and marine environment. Moreover, as they are out on the water experiencing the environment firsthand, anglers are avid conservationists. I used to make that point often when I served as Deputy Under Secretary at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. But, as I have traveled around the country I've also learned that recreational fishing practices can vary greatly from one region to another. Techniques and especially fishing tackle are often quite different, even within a state.

In Southern California, anglers use live bait on nearly every trip. That is true for anglers fishing on commercial passenger fishing vessels and on private fishing boats. A good live bait well is an essential component for both private and charter boats. The ready availability of live bait is

essential to offshore and inshore fishing, and for angling at all levels of the water column. Rods, reels and tackle for sale in Southern California are tailored for the use of live bait. One need only look at the many brands and large variety and sizes of hooks designed specifically for live bait for sale at any tackle store or charter landing to comprehend this point.

Southern California is not the only part of the US where anglers use live bait. But, unlike an area such as Florida, the average California angler cannot simply maneuver their boat into shallow water and throw a cast net to catch bait for the day's fishing. Rather, due to the emergent coast, deep water and target species, Southern California anglers, boats, and the industry are dependent on the commercial catch and availability at bait barges/net pens of live sardines and anchovies.

The saltwater sport fishery in Southern California, fueled by the availability of live bait, is an economic engine. Visit a location like Point Loma in San Diego or Oceanside or Dana Point or Newport Harbor or Long Beach during summer months and this brisk business activity and energy are obvious. We asked Southwick Associates, using NOAA and Recreational Fisheries Information Network data, if they could provide an estimate of the economic impact of the Southern California saltwater sport fishery. Their estimate is that the Southern California ocean sport fishery generates over \$1.5 billion in spending annually and supports over 12,000 jobs. Again, much of that economic activity depends on the availability of live bait.

When considering the various scientific/management statistics required by the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Management Conservation Act, it should be noted that the live bait fishery is unique in many ways. One key point is that whether as live chum or at the end of a line most of the harvest ends up right back in the same ecosystem. I know this from personal experience as an angler. For example, last month, I had the opportunity to fish off Catalina Island and channel kelp paddies. On the way back to Newport Beach, over half the bait we purchased was returned/released alive. We took care to put the bait fish back in the water so that they did not become feed for seagulls.

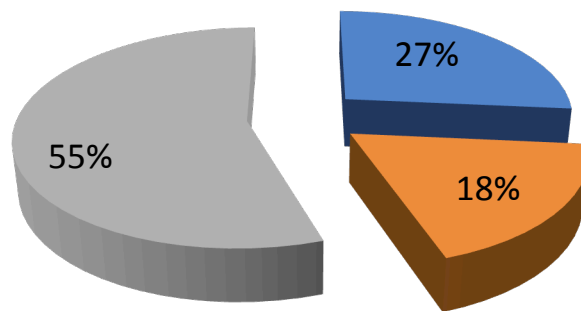
Further, the total live bait fishery for sardines (less than 1,500 metric tons) is quite small compared with the overall population. However, as the Council's background papers spell out – the status quo regulatory approach could nevertheless lead to a de facto closure of live bait fishery. This would have a severe impact on sportfishing in Southern California, the charter fishing industry, and quite possibly boat sales as well. No doubt it would have negative impacts on the sales of fishing tackle.

ASA believes that the Council should adopt "Alternative 2, Remove Prescribed Live Bait Restrictions in the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan." This alternative provides the Council with flexibility to tailor its management of sardine and anchovy bait stocks, and to set reasonable management levels and catch limits. Alternative 2 provides a better way forward in the annual management of live bait stocks. It would take into full account National Standard 8.

Mr. Chairman, there likely are not too many issues before this Council in which the recreational fishing industry, both private angler and charter boats, and the commercial fishing stakeholders agree. This issue is one where we are on the same page and recommend the same alternative to the Council. The live bait fishery in Southern California is far too important.

### Economic Value, California Ocean Fisheries

■ Commercial   ■ NorCal Sport   ■ SoCal Sport



	Jobs	Sales
Commercial*	9,105	\$747,849
NorCal Sport**	4,135	\$519,752
SoCal Sport	12,406	\$1,559,255

\* Excludes imports

\*\*25/75 north/south split (RecFIN)

#### Pacific Region | Recreational Fisheries

##### 2015 Economic Impacts of the Pacific Recreational Fishing Expenditures (thousands of dollars, trips)

	Trips	#Jobs	Sales	Income	Value Added
California	3,741	16,451	2,079,006	797,296	1,271,261
Oregon	711	3,185	313,559	138,900	202,277
Washington	1,342	6,499	774,736	297,032	482,748

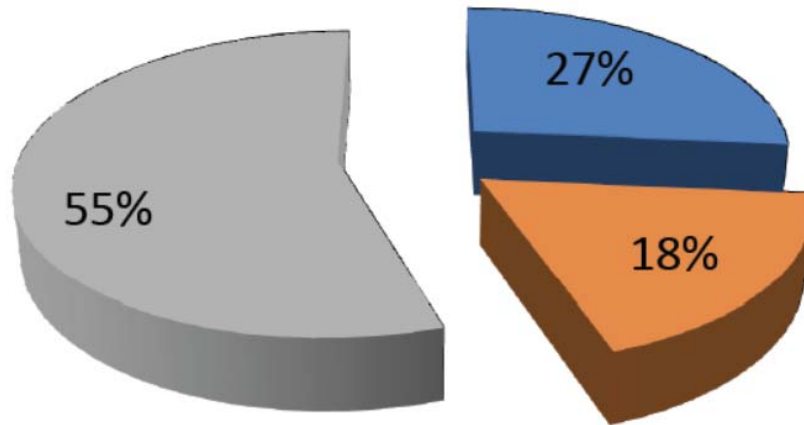
#### Pacific Region | Commercial Fisheries

##### 2015 Economic Impacts of the Pacific Seafood Industry (thousands of dollars)

	Landings Revenue	With Imports				Without Imports			
		#Jobs	Sales	Income	Value Added	#Jobs	Sales	Income	Value Added
California	129,143	113,896	21,314,558	4,530,035	7,552,746	9,105	747,849	281,375	386,989
Oregon	113,990	13,624	1,057,899	355,933	503,606	11,347	646,466	271,563	361,303
Washington	299,952	23,197	1,702,330	693,619	941,845	22,887	1,648,356	681,162	921,935

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