



CALIFORNIA WETFISH PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

Representing California's Historic Fishery

VISIT WWW.CALIFORNIAWETFISH.ORG FOR INFORMATION

March 24, 2010

Mr. Dave Ortmann, Chair &
Dr. Don McIsaac, Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place #200
Portland OR 97220-1384

RE: Agenda Item F.1.c: Adopt Final Recommendations for Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) for Pacific coast Sardine Research in 2010

Dear Chairman Ortmann, Dr. McIsaac and Council members,

The California Wetfish Producers Association (CWPA) represents the majority of active wetfish fishermen and processors from both Monterey and southern California. We appreciate this opportunity to address the Council again on the Pacific sardine EFP re-submitted to you for final approval at the April meeting.

We very much appreciate the Council's interest in the industry-sponsored aerial research program launched synoptically in 2009, leading to your approval of a 5,000 mt research set aside at your November 2009 meeting for continuing survey work in 2010. We ask that you approve the revised EFP application as submitted, including both the summer aerial survey and fall pilot project as described.

Industry in both the Pacific Northwest and California supported increasing the set aside to 5,000 mt, with the intent to reserve 800 mt for a fall pilot project in S.CA. Following the March meeting and Council discussion, we have worked closely with science advisors Dr. Doyle Hanan and Tom Jagielo to address comments and recommendations of the SSC, CPS Management Team and Council members. Under this revised EFP, we have included a description of how the 2010 survey area will be expanded both north and south, how point sets will be verified as suitable for analysis, and a detailed description of the protocol to be used in our fall pilot project.

As we noted in our March letter, we've demonstrated that sardines are visible at the surface during daylight hours in California, as in the Pacific Northwest; however, these fish are also observed and may be more readily measured at night in California. Sardine abundance peaks in California during fall and winter months [traditionally California's peak fishing season]. Thus industry and participating scientists are requesting that a small portion of this EFP, not to exceed 800 mt, be designated to permit scientists to investigate, compare and further improve survey methodology by evaluating the use of lidar, acoustics, and night-time bioluminescence photography in addition to the daylight photography methods used in the summer survey to estimate sardine abundance.

The proposed fall pilot study allows four identified vessels to catch Pacific sardine, both day and/or night as directed by the principal investigator, during October-November 2010, a time when the directed fishery is now closed.

Conducting this fall research in 2010 is critically important to meet the sardine STAR panel schedule for 2011; after 2011 the next panel will not occur until 2013 or 2014. Moreover, the only way this research can be accomplished is under an EFP because the directed sardine fishery is now closed before October, when this research is planned.

We are fully committed to ensure the success of this sardine research both summer and fall. In CA the research set aside will be taken under the guidance of CA scientists, in coordination with PNW scientists and industry, with the goal to achieve representative samples of school size to reduce uncertainty, improve on the 2009 survey, and test additional promising survey techniques.

Again, we very much appreciate the Council's interest in this research and urge you to approve the Pacific coast sardine EFP application as resubmitted, including the 800 mt allocated for a pilot project in southern CA in October-November, evaluating methods to improve biomass estimates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Pleschner-Steele".

Diane Pleschner-Steele
Executive Director