

March 11, 2016

Ms. Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

RE: Agenda Item F.3 – Deep-Set Buoy Gear Amendment Scoping

Dear Chair Lowman and members of the Council,

My name is Jonathan Gonzalez and I am from Santa Barbara, CA where I work full-time as an artist at a skateboard company. I spend my spare time volunteering as an advocate for responsible fisheries management and I'm also President of the Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association.

Today the Council is tasked with considering issues to be addressed in a FMP amendment to authorize deep-set buoy gear in West Coast HMS fisheries. Certain NGOs as well as State Senators and Assemblymembers seem to be in a big hurry to authorize deep-set buoy gear ASAP. These groups and politicians have made it clear that the reason they want to authorize deep-set buoy gear is because they mistakenly believe DSBG can and will replace DGN. Fortunately the Council sees things differently as you have made it clear on more than one occasion that you do not support any sort of "transition" away from DGN.

(Slide 2) This is why I ask the Council to take any pressure from the misguided public, certain NGOs and politicians with a grain of salt and instead try to focus more on what the scientists and fishermen who are testing this gear have to say about the so-called "fast-tracking" of DSBG. Besides, there is nothing fast about a 3-meeting Council process.

(Slide 3) Another issue for the Council to consider is future workload planning, and examining how and when this Agenda Item would best fit in. I ask that you please refer to my supplemental public comment 2 under Agenda Item I.3. I believe Federalizing HMS permits should be the top priority in order to avoid future legislative efforts that undermine the years of hard work by the Council and NMFS, as well as the importance of the DGN fishery.

After attending an information-sharing meeting at PIER on February 21, 2016, I learned that linked-buoy gear is looking to be much more productive and efficient compared to DSBG, and that DSBG may seem obsolete compared to linked-buoy gear, but both gears need more testing. The HMSMT Report under Agenda Item F.3 suggests that if the Council jointly considered DSBG, H-gear and SS-longline gear for authorization under the same decision process that it would avoid an increased workload. I suggest tabling this Agenda Item until March 2017 when more EFP Reports will be ready. Having access to this suite of multiple gear types would set the stage for a fishery that can provide a steady supply of domestically-caught, California swordfish throughout most of the year, and that's a goal I hope we all share.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Jonathan Gonzalez
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