

Dungeness Crab Task Force- Commercial Fishing Elections Frequently Asked Questions

How was the Dungeness crab task force (task force) commercial fishing election carried out?

Ocean Protection Council (OPC) staff obtained a list of all valid Dungeness crab commercial fishing permit holders from the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). These permit holders were mailed a form on December 17, 2008 which asked them to provide their updated contact information, declare their home port, nominate individuals to serve on the task force, and state whether they would be willing to serve on the task force if elected. On January 29, 2009, a second letter was mailed to permit holders with an anonymous ballot enclosed. Permit holders were asked to rank all the nominees on the ballots in order of preference; ballots were specific to each permit holder's home port-production tier combination. Voting concluded on February 20, 2009. Once ballots were tabulated, elected representatives were notified of their appointment and their names were released to the public on March 12, 2009.

How were the ballots tabulated?

All first choice votes were compiled for a particular home port-production tier combination. If no nominee received a majority of the votes then an instant run-off voting (IRV) process was used. IRV is a voting system used for single-winner elections in which voters rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate received a majority of first preference rankings, then the candidate with the fewest number of votes was eliminated and that candidate's votes were redistributed to the voter's next preference among the remaining candidates. This process was repeated until one candidate had a majority of votes among remaining candidates.

Who was allowed to participate in the Dungeness crab task force commercial fishing elections?

All valid Dungeness crab commercial permit holders were invited to participate in the voting process. If a permit holder had another licensed Dungeness crab fishermen using their permit, the permit holder was allowed to assign their vote to be cast by the active, licensed permit user. Additionally, these licensed commercial Dungeness crab fishermen who did not own a permit were allowed to be nominated and elected to the task force (i.e., it was often the case that a permit holder would prefer that their boat captain serve on the task force and participate in the task force elections in their place).

I was nominated by my peers so why was my name not included on the ballot?

If an individual was nominated to the task force and declared in the first mail out form that they were not willing to serve on the task force if elected, then their name was not included on the ballot. If a nominated individual did not return the first form, OPC staff contacted them to ask if they wanted to accept the nomination. If the individual declined the nomination or if OPC staff could not reach the nominated individual, the name was not included as a nominee on the ballot. Staff needed the consent of each nominated individual prior to placing their names on the ballot to avoid releasing private or confidential information.

How were the production tiers calculated?

Production levels were calculated pursuant to the direction of Section 8276.4 of the California Fish and Game Code and were “based on the average landing during the previous five years, of valid crab permit holders who landed a minimum of 25,000 pounds of crab during the same period.” In other words, everyone within a specific port who landed at least 25,000 pounds in five years was put into a pool. The five-year cumulative landings of all of the individuals in the pool were averaged. Everyone who landed more than the average was placed in the upper tier and everyone who landed below the average (including those who landed less than 25,000 pounds in five years) was placed in the lower tier. This calculation was specific to each port and therefore the division between the upper and lower tier varied from port to port.

Some of the nominees on my nonresident ballot are from Crescent City. Why are they on the nonresident ballot?

California nonresident permit holders are defined as those individuals paying for a nonresident permit regardless of where their boat is berthed.

The ballot I received is not my home port. Why did I receive a ballot for the wrong home port?

If you did not return the first mail out and, therefore did not declare an updated home port, a home port was assigned to you based on existing DFG data that can be updated when fishermen renew their yearly permit.

Why does someone have their name on both the upper and lower tier ballots for my home port?

Production tiers were based on landings by permit, not by “L” number. Thus, if an individual owns more than one permit, then they are eligible to represent and vote on both permits (i.e., If someone has two permitted boats, one that has high landings and one that has low landings, then that person is eligible to represent both the high landings boat and the low landings boat).

I am in the lower production tier. Does this mean I get fewer pots?

Production tiers were calculated according to the language of the bill to determine representatives for the task force. These production tiers are ONLY for the purposes of creating the task force – not for establishing future management.

Why can't I vote for someone in a different production tier than my own?

Pursuant to Section 8276.4(a)(7), valid permit holders may only vote for representatives within their home port and production tier.