

Proposal to the DCTF from a Eureka Representative Member

Here's a proposed plan for funding SB 1093 and addressing DFG concerns. It's not without flaws!

DFG is requesting funding for administration and enforcement as follows: \$1.33 per tag X 175,000 tags = \$232,750 plus an additional \$250-300,000 per year for enforcement, totaling about \$500,000 per year.

At the present time fishermen pay \$235 per year for their crab permit: \$235 X 600 permits = \$141,000 per year. Actually, it's more than this when taking nonresident fees into account; about \$160,000 total.

This proposal is to have an "all inclusive" fee of \$700 per year that includes renewal of the permit, administration of the pot limit program and enforcement of the pot limit plan. This would generate \$700 X 600 permits = \$420,000 per year. All permit holders will be charged the same fee whether they fish or not. Nonresident permit holders may or may not be charged an additional amount; \$375 more, perhaps (90 permits X \$375 = \$33,750)? In any case, we are approaching the \$500k requested by DFG.

Analysis: Every permit holder qualifying for 250 pots or more, i.e., "active permits", will pay less under this plan than would be paid under a \$2 per pot tag plus current permit renewal fee of \$235. For example, with a \$2 per tag plan a 250 pot fisherman would pay \$500 for tag fees plus \$235 renewal fee = \$735. The "all inclusive" plan is a \$35 savings. A 500 pot fisherman also pays \$700 "all inclusive" compared to \$1235 with a \$2 per tag plan. Similar savings apply to all categories except for the latent permit group at 175 pots per fisherman (\$585 compared to \$700). This could serve to shake some of the latent permits out.

Now...DFG will object to using the current \$235 renewal fee to support the pot limit plan. Our response is that the crab fleet has been grossly overcharged for years with \$200-235 for the crab permit. Remember, all we physically get for this fee is a stamp attached to the license. If DFG can physically produce, distribute and administer pot tags for \$1.33 per unit, i.e., 177 tags for \$235, how can they justify the production, distribution and administration of one simple stamp for the same amount of money? (Is the answer to that question: they don't have to justify it)? In any case, I favor looking to the current \$235 permit fee as a way to supplement the total cost...we have arguably been "paying forward" for some years.

Flaws... 1) Compared to a "pay-as-you-play, \$2 per tag" plan, this "all inclusive" plan would entitle all permit holders access to all their pot tags at the time of renewal. There could be thousands of otherwise "latent" tags in circulation available for lease. Would a lesser renewal fee with a declaration of temporarily inactive solve this? Or a regulation to not allow combining two permits on one boat, fish your own gear off your own boat?

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2) In nearly every port there are a few older fishermen, commercially licensed, with small boats fishing very few pots (10-20 pots), trading crabs, selling crabs, etc.; virtually no impact on the fishery. A \$700 renewal would likely prove very difficult on these few. An exemption for anyone over 68, 70 or older...or "tough luck"?

There is here in Eureka some sentiment for letting the bill die in committee (no surprise!) if the fees get too high. Probably the same elsewhere; proof of exactly why we need to maintain some sort of "veto" power.