

California State Senate



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January 29, 2010

Samuel P. Schuchat, Secretary
Neal Fishman, Deputy Executive Officer
Ocean Protection Council
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Dungeness Crab Task Force

Dear Mr. Schuchat and Mr. Fishman:

I would like to thank you and your staff for the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) work to date overseeing the Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF). Thanks to your work implementing SB 1690, the Dungeness crab fishermen have an outlet to speak as a collective entity.

Upon review of the DCTF report, I am encouraged to see that the DCTF has made progress on the issues of regional trap limits, Tri-State Dungeness Crab Commission and the definition of latent permits. I appreciate these accomplishments, especially given the budget constraints within which your organization has been operating.

However, I am concerned about a lack of progress in other areas. It appears that a number of crab fishery issues, as outlined in SB 1690, have yet to be acted upon or finalized. I authored SB 1690 with the hope that the fishery issues affecting crab ports all along California's coast could be resolved since previous legislative efforts were not driven by the industry as a whole. I am hopeful that the Task Force will be able to find agreement on a number of the remaining issues enabling me to put forth meaningful legislation in March. I understand there is a Task Force meeting scheduled for February – this meeting represents an important opportunity for the DCTF to finalize its work on several issues to date.

I would request that the group address and make recommendations on the following issues, most of which are identified in the legislation:

- **Short and Long-term management objectives for the fishery.** While it is difficult for stakeholders to look many years down the road, it is the legislature's intent to guarantee the longevity of the crabs, the crabbers and the ports. I hope the DCTF will finalize its previous discussions about management objectives and report its conclusions.
- **Collection of Essential Fishery Information.** There continues to be a lack of scientific data on the Dungeness crab fishery including gear usage, effort, and population dynamics. OPC has been a leader in advocating for science based management. I

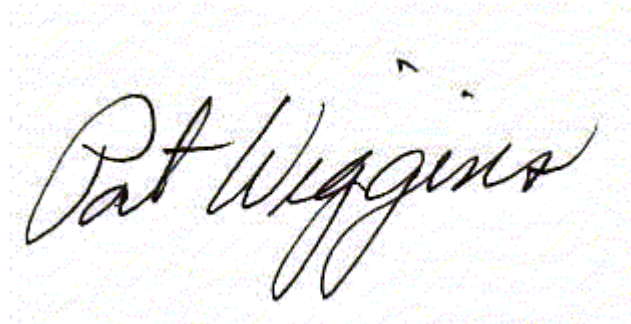
hope you will utilize your expertise in this area to assist the DCTF in identify what information is needed to adequately monitor and manage the fishery.

- **A recommendation on crab management options.** There are many examples of successful management programs for invertebrate fisheries throughout the world. I hope the Task Force can reach agreement on a management approach or approaches that can be pursued through legislation and evaluated for their effectiveness in the future.
- **Continuation of the DCTF beyond January 1, 2011.** As stated earlier, the DCTF represents the first time the Dungeness crab fishery has spoken as a whole, giving voice to the industry. The DCTF still has a number of issues to address and should remain intact to address future issues related to the fishery. The Task Force should finalize this issue and discuss funding options if it is to be continued.

I understand that reaching agreement among two-thirds of the Task Force on these issues can be difficult. However, finding industry-wide common ground on these basic issues would be a vast improvement over previous piecemeal legislative proposals which have proven to be divisive and ultimately unsuccessful. I urge the DCTF to continue its work through 2010 to ensure that the issues that it is required to address under SB 1690 can be brought forth prior to the end of this year's legislative cycle.

I am confident that under OPC's competent direction the Task Force can make substantive progress on these critical issues at the upcoming February meeting. If I or my staff can be of assistance to OPC in the coming months, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Wiggins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PATRICIA WIGGINS
Senator, 2nd District

PW: ts