



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

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February 09, 2010

Hon. Patricia Wiggins
Capitol Office
State Capitol, Room 4081
Sacramento, CA 94814

Dear Senator Wiggins,

Thank you for your letter on January 29, 2010 concerning the Dungeness crab task force (DCTF) established by SB 1690. Many thanks also for taking the time to read the January 15, 2010 report and providing feedback. My staff will share your letter with the DCTF as well as this written response.

Before responding to the substance of your remarks, I wanted to convey our overall perspective on the DCTF. The OPC has no particular agenda in implementing SB1690. Our job is to convene the fishery participants, encourage them to talk, give them the tools to make decisions, and remain a neutral entity. In other words, we are here to empower the DCTF members to generate recommendations of their own. The OPC cannot, and should not, provide recommendations on their behalf.

With respect to your concerns about the lack of progress, I would like to assure you that there has been, and will continue to be discussions on the issues you mentioned in your letter. I would like to address each of your concerns individually:

- **Short- and Long-term Management Objectives for the Fishery-** This is a very important issue that was discussed at the first three meetings of the DCTF. At the conclusion of meeting #3, the DCTF decided that they did not want a formal vote on objectives because they believed a vote would ultimately detract from their progress. While OPC staff were not necessarily in agreement, the DCTF decided to move forward and discuss management options. After requests from various stakeholders and your staff that the DCTF revisit these issues to put their recommendations in context, we have added it onto the agenda for the February 17-18, 2010 meeting in Ukiah, CA. Ultimately, it is up to the DCTF to decide whether or not they would like to have a formal vote on short- and long-term objectives.
- **Collection of Essential Fishery Information-** This topic has been discussed at nearly every DCTF meeting to-date. However, the group has been unable to refine recommendations with respect to this issue or decide on funding mechanisms to fulfill

this need. As you mentioned, OPC encourages science-based management and staff will work to fulfill the need for this information as part of any relevant recommendation from the DCTF and where appropriate.

- **Recommendations of Crab Management Options-** The DCTF made a conditional recommendation in their January 15, 2010 report on the management of the crab fishery. Recommendation 2 in the report is a conditional recommendation for a pot limit in district 10. The DCTF plans revisit this recommendation at the February meeting for further refinement of the details of the recommended pot limit program. They will also be discussing and voting on other management options.
- **Continuation of the DCTF beyond January 1, 2011-** The DCTF has discussed advisory and management bodies at nearly every DCTF meeting to-date and has been unable to reach an agreement these issues. This topic is on the agenda for the February 2010 meeting. However, should the DCTF recommend a continuation of the DCTF, they must also recommend a way to fund it. We intend to support whatever recommendation is made to the best of our ability. However, the OPC was never appropriated any funds from the legislature to administer the DCTF and does not have the budget to continue absent a marked change in the state's financial condition.

We look forward to the assistance of your staff in implementing the recommendations from both the DCTF January 15, 2010 report and whatever comes out of future meetings of the DCTF.

I sincerely appreciate your letter and look forward to working with your staff in continuing the work of SB1690.

Warmest Regards,



Sam Schuchat
Secretary, Ocean Protection Council