

There is very little support for further regulation of the Dungeness Crab fishery in the Port of Trinidad. Two major hurdles arise when the discussion of pot limits is mentioned amongst Trinidad Fishermen. The first is a fear that whatever is recommended at the DCTF will be altered or unintended consequences will occur when it becomes law and the other is the costs associated with administering a pot limit, the continuation of a formal DCTF or a Crab marketing Committee.

It seems whenever a piece of legislation is introduced that is generally supported by fishermen it generally "morphs" whether intentionally or unintentionally into a law or regulation that has unintended negative economic consequences. For example the MLPA (Marine Life Protection Act) that was originally passed to help rebuild groundfish stocks and has turned into a monstrosity that will close 20% State waters forever to all or most fishing even though most groundfish stocks have already rebuilt. Another example is the Nearshore fishery plan that reduced quotas and set up a 2 for 1 limited entry program. The limited entry program has been so effective in reducing capacity that it is virtually impossible to get a live buyer to stop because so few fishermen can catch so few fish. If an emergency situation occurs at Trinidad that would require me to call for assistance, the nearest Nearshore fishermen that I could call is about 75 miles away. The end result of the Nearshore fishery Plan has virtually eliminated the Nearshore fishery on the North Coast.

Another concern that often arises is the costs associated with administering further regulation and enforcement. Trinidad Pier is privately owned and operated and maintenance and operation costs associated with the pier are paid for by the fishermen in the form of a per pound assessment. This assessment coupled with federal boat buyback assessments and association fees results in a 25 cent per pound deduction. Any further deductions, taxes etc. will likely prove to be unbearable by the fleet and further attrition will likely occur.

Without assurances that administration and regulatory costs will be offset by increased profitability of the fishery such as crabbing being allowed in MPA's, higher ex-vessel prices etc. There will continue to be very little support from our port for further regulations.

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