

*Public comment submitted to the California Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) on June 29, 2017*

Hi,

I'm a lawyer who represents a number of fishermen and it is on their behalf that I would like to say the following:

1. It would be greatly appreciated if the Task Force would take some action to emphasize the need for the disaster money. When the season first closed, a number of fisherman were driven out of the business.

However this is still an issue. At this time there are fishermen who are unable to maintain their insurance, are unable to replace gear that will enable them to be competitive, cannot afford the safety equipment that will allow them access to other fisheries and can't afford necessary preventive maintenance on their boats. There are also a number of Fishermen who are being forced to sell their boats.

This is only going to result in more fishing families being squeezed out of the business.

A fisherman's wife tells the story of her daughter asking "How come Daddy isn't happy anymore?"

This information needs to come from an "official" voice as opposed to individuals making calls...and this is where the Task Force can help.

2. There needs to be a better means of communication with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Aside from the fact that we have new laws, old laws are being enforced in ways that they have not been in the past.

I was involved in a case a few years ago where a law was being interpreted in such a way that every crabber from here to Alaska would have been made a criminal.

At that time I explained the situation to Zeke Grader who was able to talk with the Department of Fish and Game to get the matter dropped. However Zeke is no longer with us and no one else seems to have the "connection" to DFW that Zeke had.

What I propose is that an e-mail line to DFW be made available so that Fishermen can get specific answers to their questions and also that the lines of communication be opened with DFW so that before the courts are involved some common sense can be added to the mix.

I don't fault the Game Wardens or the District Attorneys for any of this because they are not fishermen and there are things they can't learn from books.

However more communication with the Fishermen will allow for a more effective and efficient use of resources...and help to take some of the "fear" out of being a fisherman.

Thank you for your time.

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