

CALIFORNIA DUNGENESS CRAB FISHING GEAR WORKING GROUP

April 5, 2018

The Honorable Senator McGuire
Chair, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
State Capitol, Room 5061
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB-1309 Fishing: Fisheries Omnibus Bill of 2018

Dear Senator McGuire,

The California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) is writing to express our support for Fish and Game Code Section 9005 of the Fisheries Omnibus Bill of 2018 (Senate Bill 1309) regarding establishing standardized gear marking to help identify the origins of gear involved in whale entanglement events at a fishery level.

This code section is reflective of the recommendation in the Working Group's January 10, 2018 memo, which recommends the state establish standardized gear markings for all California fixed-gear fisheries and those fisheries known to be involved in whale entanglements. We appreciate your inclusion of our recommendation in SB 1309. This action will help the state and its partners, including the Working Group, to gather important information about the origins of entanglements (e.g., fishery, gear set-up, timing, etc.) and work to reduce entanglement risk.

The Working Group advises that gear markings focus on surface gear and are designed to be visible if involved in an entanglement. We encourage managers to be flexible and adaptive when developing standardized gear marking during the Title 14 process.

The Working Group continues to discuss other components of SB 1309 with specific attention to Fish and Game Code Section 8276.1. There is general support for the premise of granting authority to the Director to implement the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) and we are working diligently to provide you with possible amendment suggestions to this section later this month.

We appreciate your support of our continuous efforts to reduce the risk of whale entanglements. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with the Working Group's Administrative Team with any questions (info@cawhalegroup.com or 310-738-2665).

Sincerely,
The California Whale Entanglement Working Group
(omits state and federal agency participants)

Jim Anderson, Commercial Fishing, Half Moon Bay

Tom Dempsey, The Nature Conservancy

Calder Deyerle, Commercial Fishing, Monterey Bay Area

Tom Estes, Commercial Fishing, Fort Bragg

Kathi George, California Whale Rescue

Gerry Hemmingsen, Commercial Fishing, Crescent City

Doug Laughlin, Coastside Fishing Club

Bob Maharry, Commercial Fishing, Morro Bay

Tom Mattusch, Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel

John Mellor, Commercial Fishing, San Francisco

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