

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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## LETTER TO INDUSTRY REGARDING GEAR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

At the February joint session of the Alaska Board of Fisheries (Board) and the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council) the issue of gear conflict between groundfish trawl fisheries and crab and groundfish pot fisheries was discussed. The Board and Council were informed that gear conflicts between trawl and pot vessels sometimes occur when trawl nets catch crab or groundfish pots while fishing groundfish. Pot loss occurs both to pots being actively fished and to pots which are being stored on the grounds. Both gear types suffer gear damage and lost fishing opportunities in these interactions.

The Board and Council were apprised that an initial meeting of members of the two gear groups has occurred and that preliminary discussions were encouraging. The two management bodies are pleased that this inter-industry gear conflict may be resolved outside of the regulatory process. Industry is well aware that the elevation of conflicts to regulatory bodies often leads to unintended consequences which may not result in the anticipated benefits sought by industry.

The Board and Council wish to take this opportunity to strongly encourage the two affected gear groups to continue striving to resolve this matter. We are tasking a staff member from the United States Coast Guard and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to help facilitate your meetings. We suggest that you set a goal of resolution prior to the fall 1998 B-season.

Again, we compliment you on your intent to resolve this issue and applaud your efforts. Staff will be contacting you to schedule the next meeting.

Sincerely,

Richard B. Lauber, Chairman  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Dr. John R. White, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Fisheries