

Deep Sea Fishermen's Union of the Pacific

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Established 1912

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Mr. Dan Hull, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

Re: NPFMC agenda item C6 GF14-052: GOA Sablefish longline Pots

Dear Chairman Hull:

The Deep Sea Fishermen's Union has been fishing the waters off Washington and Alaska since it was established in 1912, long before Alaska was ever a State. For over 100 years our members have crewed on vessels longlining for halibut and sablefish. We have fought on the side of sustainability, safer working conditions & equal rights in this fishery.

Today we are writing to express our concerns about the current discussions regarding the usage of pot fishing the Gulf of Alaska for sablefish. We are asking that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council give due consideration to our requests.

We respectfully submit the following to be considered:

1. First and foremost, we feel the problem is the whales, not the gear used. Therefore we believe the best solution is a whale deterrent. We believe Saltonstall-Kennedy funding through NOAA would be appropriate. As their website reads: *"The Saltonstall-Kennedy Act established a fund used by the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants or cooperative agreements for fisheries research and development projects addressing aspects of U.S. fisheries, including, but not limited to harvesting, processing, marketing and associated business infrastructures. The objective of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program is to address the needs of the fisheries and fishing communities in optimizing economic*

- benefits within the context of rebuilding and maintaining sustainable fisheries and in dealing with the impacts of conservation and management measures". We request a study be done to research the development of a whale deterrent project using Saltonstall-Kennedy funds to address the needs of the fishing community to optimize the economic benefits within the context of rebuilding and maintaining the sustainability of the sablefish fishery in the Gulf of Alaska.*
2. We request a study of the effects on crewmen's income when the longline vessel they crew on decides to lease out their sablefish quota to a pot boat rather than fish it themselves?
 3. We request a lost gear monitoring program be established. Lost gear causes a hazard to longliners.
 4. We request a study of what the topographical impacts would be to the sea floor with increased use of pot gear.
 5. We request if the sablefish quota is leased out from a longlining vessel to fish in pots that the owner is required to be onboard
 6. We request there be time and area closures to reduce gear conflicts between pot boats and longliners.
 7. We request that the pot boats be required to remove their pots from the fishing ground when they go to town to unload.
 8. We request that each pot has a registered tag on it so as to better keep track of any lost gear. And that said lost gear be reported and documented.
 9. We request that there be a pot limit of 250 pots and that these pots can be removed from the grounds by the fishing boat in one trip.
 10. We request that transponders be used on each end of a set of pots in order to alert other gear types as to its presence. These transponders signals can be monitored by other fishermen by computer through a central receiving station, similar to the AIS program.
 11. We request that a pot survey boat work in conjunction with an IPHC longline survey boat to determine the effect of sablefish pot fishing on halibut depredation as well as the effects on other sablefish longline boats.
 12. In the event that the U.S. Navy accepts our invitation to perform their Naval Training Exercises during which time the use of sonar will deter the whales, we request there be no pot fishing in that area.

In conclusion, we feel this issue is moving far too fast without appropriate studies and thought given to the long lasting effects fishing pots in the GOA could have on the environment and the fishery. Our oceans are a microcosm of amazing relationships between all living things. You change one thing and you are changing an entire ecosystem. We ask the Council be very cautious in establishing any new management processes without full understanding of the consequences.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jan Standaert, President

