



AGENDA ITEM 9 MAR 1979

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

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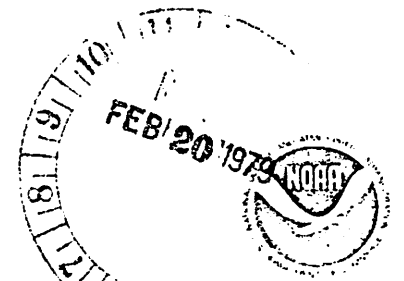
SUBJECT: Consideration of ship-board processing or at sea deliveries by
the king crab FMP drafting team.

DATE: February 16, 1979

The Drafting Team met during the week of February 5-9. In the course of the meeting, we considered the subject of U.S. catcher/processors in the crab fishery. Our consideration was in the context of the Duin/Rietze memo and the Advisory panel minutes (Jan. 24, 1979; re: Agenda Item 19). It was our feeling (in consultation with the Council staff) that there was insufficient guidance from the council as to how consideration of catcher/processors should be incorporated in the plan. Alternatively, we decided that the matter should be further investigated and I was designated to consider the problem in cooperation with Sig Jaeger.

Sig Jaeger and I had a prolonged discussion of the subject on February 7. We agreed that the following factors should be considered in devising options for dealing with the situation and establishing the time-frame over which action should take place.

1. Catcher/processors are part of the more general problem of at-sea deliveries/ processing.
2. Currently catcher/processors account for a small proportion of the catch (perhaps 1-2%).
3. There will probably be no more than eight C/P vessels in 1979.
4. Because of hold space considerations, vessels smaller than 150-160 ft. are probably not viable.
5. C/P vessels may result in more efficient utilization because of reduced dead-loss.



6. Consideration of the "problem" should include the probable or forecasted role of C/P vessels in expansion of U.S. groundfish harvests.
7. Enforcement problems have, to date, been negligible.
8. The need for observers is recognized by C/P vessel owners/operators.
9. Financial arrangements are difficult to project, but the following seems reasonable:
 - a. Insurance costs (protection and indemnity) for observers should be borne by Management agencies.
 - b. Salaries should be paid by Management agencies.
 - c. Room/board should be furnished by vessels.

In considering catcher/processor operations, members of the drafting team and others have reiterated two points made in the January Advisory panel meeting:

1. We should not discourage the development of catcher/processors by U. S. industry.
2. Enforcement of size-sex or other regulations is the most important problem to be dealt with at this time.

Regarding the latter point, everyone seems to agree that full or part-time ("spot checking") observers will be necessary. Several have voiced the possibility of paying for observers by use of permit fees for C/P vessels; however, the legal and legislative problems or constraints associated with such fees need clarification.

Because it is possible to judge the width of a crab from knowledge of the claw size or merus (first leg segment) size, it may be that the optimum method of placing observers on C/P vessels would differ depending on whether the vessel was processing crabs as sections or as picked meat. For example, two types of license or registration could be required with "spot checking" of vessels packing sections and full time coverage of vessels packing meat. The use of merus or claw size as a surrogate for width measurements could, however, present legal problems.

Further consideration of observer options breaks down as follows:

Option 1. Full time observer coverage.

- Advantages: a) most likely to insure compliance with regulations
b) represents full time series coverage and quantification.

Disadvantages: a) most costly b) could result in lost vessel time due to transfer of observers or in case of medical emergency.

Option 2. Partial coverage.

Advantages: a) less costly b) provides opportunity to assess problem before committing full funding.

Disadvantages: a) may not insure compliance b) does not provide for full time quantification.

Option 3. Mixture of full and partial coverage (i.e. full time on some but not on others)

Advantages: a) flexibility b) reduced costs.

Disadvantages: same as Option 2.

Option 4. Spot checking by existing enforcement agents.

Advantages: a) least costly b) may provide for definition of problem before committing additional resources.

Disadvantages: a) probably least likely to insure compliance.

As a final note, several people have pointed out that it is very difficult to judge how much emphasis should be placed on insuring compliance without some idea of what options are available as deterrents (penalties). In this context it seems logical to suppose that capital investment in a catcher/processor vessel is high and perhaps risks associated with interruption of operations during some sort of litigation would exceed possible gains from "bending" regulations.

RSO/rk

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