

November 22, 2014

Chairman Dan Hull
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Re: GOA Sablefish Longline Pots

Dear Chairman Hull:

This letter is in support of GOA sablefish longline pots. As the owner/operator of a 58-foot vessel, I have seen firsthand the ever-increasing depredation of sablefish from both the sperm and killer whales in the GOA. I strongly believe that we have been overharvesting the sablefish quota in the GOA due to the whale predation over the last five years. Permitting the use of longline pots for sablefish in the GOA is a conservation measure and in turn will drastically reduce bycatch in this fishery.

Due to my firsthand experience fishing longline pots in the Bering Sea for sablefish, I want to stress the importance of making the GOA longline pot fishing economical and viable for all involved.

Removing pots from the grounds to deliver the product to shore-based processors or running from weather would not be viable for a wide range of vessels. The removal of pots from the grounds would only benefit a handful of larger vessels.

During my time on the gear committee there was much discussion of implementing a 400-pot limit. I am in support of this as it will reduce the preemption of grounds when pots are left on the grounds in order to deliver product. This limit will make it more fair and equitable among all vessels regardless of size that choose to participate.

I believe that gear conflicts have been reduced over the last decade due to increased communication and electronic advancements. With a pot limit in place, the vessels' gear footprint will be similar in size to that of a hook-and-line vessel. The Pacific West Coast is a prime example where trawl, hook-and-line, and longline pot boats coexist and operate well together.

In closing, I would request the NPFMC to permit longline pot fishing in the GOA and to reduce and minimize overregulation and gear restrictions as much as possible. The use of longline pots will decrease whale predation as well as the incidental catch of non-targeted species.

Thank you,

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