

# North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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The Honorable John Negroponte  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Oceans and Fisheries Affairs  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

The North Pacific Council has debated the many aspects of an agreement with Canada regarding the fishery resources, including halibut, in the Northeast Pacific at great length but has not arrived at a position. It is the unanimous opinion of the Council that the U.S. State Department should initiate early discussions with the Government of Canada concerning west coast non-salmon issues, including halibut, with no prior restrictions, except that before any agreement is finalized the North Pacific Council, the Pacific Council, and the States of Alaska and Washington will be consulted and appropriate representation from those four bodies be included when final negotiations with Canada are conducted.

The opinions of individual Council members on the question of reciprocal fishing privileges for halibut range from those expressed in Governor Hammond's letter to you of January 23, 1979, to a willingness to consider some sort of phaseout scheme for Canadian fishermen off Alaska. I want to reiterate, however, that the Council as a group has not taken a position or reached a consensus on this question. The members do not wish to do so until they have an opportunity to study all aspects of the matter as you develop the possibilities during your negotiations with Canada.

The Council does recognize the urgency and the immediate necessity of maintaining the research capabilities of the International Pacific Halibut Commission staff in the interests of conservation of the resource and as a basis for effective fisheries management. Every effort should be made to achieve cooperative management of transboundary stocks of all species, and specifically of halibut, by Canada and the United States since without this constructive cooperation either nation can damage the resource to the detriment of both.

In summary, the members of the North Pacific Council want to accord our negotiators maximum flexibility in forthcoming U.S.-Canada negotiations and therefore do not want to foreclose any reasonable options at this time.

The Council is very pleased that you will be handling the west coast negotiations; we have confidence in your astuteness and great respect for your ability as a negotiator.

Sincerely,

Jim H. Branson  
Executive Director