



Agenda Item 16

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P. O. Box 1668, Juneau, Alaska 99802

April 12, 1977

Mr. Elmer Rasmuson, Chairman
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Post Office Box 3136DT
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

APR 18, 1977

Re: Fishery Development Steering Committees

Dear Elmer:

As you know, one of the purposes of the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act of 1976 is "to encourage the development of fisheries which are currently underutilized or not utilized by the United States fishermen, including bottomfish off Alaska". The major initiative for fisheries development activities rests with industry, but the NMFS and the Sea Grant office are charged to assist industry with fishery development planning, research and technical services.

A few firms have initiated action to utilize Alaska bottomfish resources. For the most part however, the Alaska seafood processing industry lags in development of available resource---especially so relative to the increasing market demand in the U.S. for bottomfish fillet and block products and for clam products. Further, the market potential for snow crab in the U.S. remains to be fully realized.

The development of the Alaskan fishery for groundfish can be accelerated through coordinated efforts between industry, government agencies, and universities. There is a need to focus development funds, planning, research, and production activities on specific target fisheries which have good promise for immediate market acceptance; and to plan development of currently little-used fishery resources with potential markets.

We wish to propose that a fisheries development steering committee be established by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to assist in coordinated efforts to develop U.S. groundfish capabilities. Some members of such

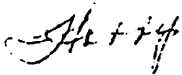
a committee could be selected from the Council's Advisory Panel. The membership mix of the committee, however, should be broadened to the full range of talent, expertise, or position necessary for ensuring productive results. This could be achieved by including individuals representing universities and the developmental and financial assistance agencies of government, as well as certain specialists from industry who may not be members of the Council's Advisory Panel.

The steering committee would recommend target fisheries and priority projects on which industry and government funds and expertise would be focused. The recommendations would pass through the Council to the government agencies and the universities for coordinated efforts with industry. We would envision that planning would be the primary task of the steering committee. The committee's recommendations would be put into action by working committees on specific target species, e.g., bottomfish, sablefish, subtidal clams, and snow crab.

The working committees would operate within the steering committee's recommendations. Membership of working committees could consist of the industry-government-university experts necessary to complete the task. Funds would be supplied by government agencies and industry, but the Council could play a major role in supporting requests for adequate funds to carry out the recommended development projects.

We propose the foregoing for your consideration in the belief that it will serve as a catalyst for fisheries development in the North Pacific. We would be prepared to discuss our proposal at the April or May meeting of the Council if appropriate.

Sincerely,



Harry L. Rietze
Director, Alaska Region