



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Agenda #19
January 1979
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Mr. Jim H. BRANSON
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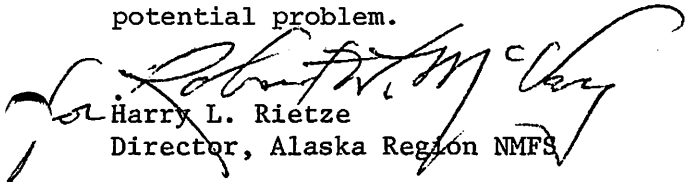
Dear Jim:

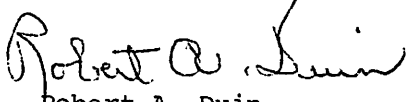
In recent meetings between the Coast Guard, National Marine Fisheries Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Alaska Department of Public Safety, we have been exploring cooperative enforcement efforts in enforcement of the Tanner Crab Plan. During these meetings, ADES informed us that during the recently completed king crab season there was one catcher/freezer vessel operating in the Bering Sea that was catching, sectioning and freezing crab in raw form and reportedly selling directly to the Japanese. We have always been concerned about the large scale advent of catcher/processor vessels, as the catcher/freezer operation would add a further dimension to potential management and enforcement problems.

Our information, though sketchy, indicates that several additional vessels of this type are in various stages of planning or construction and that the cost of conversion of existing vessels would not be great. Any large scale change to this type of operation would have major social, management and enforcement implications. There would be significant impact on shore based processing in Alaska and upon the towns that are tied economically to the processing industry. Because of the underway processing and transfer involved, size and sex regulations would be very difficult to enforce and, the reliability of catch data would be questionable.

There are clearly major policy issues involved in this matter. Some of the more important considerations include determinations as to whether this type of operation could be a fully acceptable alternative to shore-side processing, whether shoreside processing should receive any specific preference and whether full-time observers should be required.

The purpose of this letter is simply to present a possible problem which may have some future significance. We are not prepared to offer any solutions because we do not presently have a complete grasp of the problem, if it is a problem. However, since we are in the midst of drafting the King Crab Plan and will soon be considering revisions to the Tanner Crab Plan, this seems to be an appropriate time to surface this potential problem.


Harry L. Rietze
Director, Alaska Region NMFS


Robert A. Duin
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