

February 12, 2016

Director Chuck Bonham-California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Stafford Lehr-California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Sonke Mastrup-California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Craig Shuman-California Department of Fish and Wildlife

This has been unlike any season we have experienced. The presence of Domoic acid in the Dungeness crab has triggered a statewide closure. Along with the Dungeness crab fleet, the public has suffered the loss of this valuable resource. We applaud the opening of Dungeness crab in the area south of Point Reyes. On a normal year, lines are not drawn in this way but this is not a normal year. The crab fleet has lost irreplaceable fishing time along with its prime marketing season and the public has lost the ability to enjoy its resource during the holidays. The problem that now exists is that only a select few of the public are allowed to enjoy this resource, those with expensive sport boats. Opening the season with unfamiliar lines will create a challenge for both fishermen and buyers but we would rather meet those challenges than stay tied to the dock where nobody wins.

This sport opener has shown that the department is doing everything in its power to make Dungeness crab available to the public and we ask that it stays this course. Letters will be written and emails will be sent in opposition to opening the season with different lines but the crab has cleaned up in those areas and they are drawing the lines. Life has shown itself to be imperfect and waiting around for it to become perfect only prolongs the public from getting to enjoy its resource. Oregon tested three times and found that their samples were moving in an upwardly trend but opened the season anyway. The public benefited and the fishermen benefited. Opening areas as they come clean assures the public the fastest method to enjoying their product. Fishermen have gone as far as to spread rumors of soft shell crab and that the season is not worth starting now. The crabs that are being landed at this moment are in perfect condition and some of the sweetest in taste. This phenomenon is probably due to the amount of time they have had to feed. If certain fishermen do not feel that there is any reason to fish then they have it within their power to not leave the dock. Some of us are not that affluent. Some will attempt to spread fear by stating that starting at this time of year could be a resource issue when we already know that management measures are put in place to deal with that as only the largest males are legal to take.

We fish for a living and are writing this letter to express our views. The Half Moon Bay Association is made up of a handful of guys that have become our vocal minority. Please continue to open the areas that test clean whether it is convenient for the vocal minority or not. The below vessels and people would like to be known as these are their views.

F/V Northern Light Stephen Melz
Matt Jobe
Larry Peterson

S&J Fisheries

F/V New Day Todd Korth
F/V Polaris Drew Lewis
F/V Pale Horse Rick Hauschel
F/V T Ann Don Marshall
Braedon Breton
F/V Golden Girl Dan Durbin
Jim Curetlan
Rose Mar Fisheries
F/V Rose Mar Steve Moore
Cale Moore
Nate Moore
F/V Sea Pearl Joe Wallace
David Doering
Kyle Miller
F/V Miss Jessie & F/V Cynthia Patty Davis
F/V Fishy Business Joe Cullen
F/V Carley Diane Rob Isaacson
F/V Santana Mike Sardina
F/V Gabbiano Giovanni Nevlooso
F/V Pacific Endeavor Jerry Wettle
Joseph Lucido
F/V Sea Hawk Mike Ricketts
F/V Alecia Dawn Adam Aliotti
F/V Profish'nt Andrew Amaral
F/V Aqua Leo Tom Faulk
Sanctuary Stainless Dave Jablanski
F/V Bountiful Victor Lescinkas
F/V Donita Ann Timmer
F/V Major Steppen Stone Duncan MacLean