

Salmon Troller's Marketing Association
PO Box 137
Fort Bragg CA 95437

April 6, 2017

VIA EMAIL

Charlton H. Bonham, Director
State of California -Department of Fish & Wildlife
1416 Ninth Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Director Bonham:

Please accept our sincere gratitude in your support of the commercial crab fishing industry. The Salmon Troller's Marketing Association (STMA) represents fisherman from Shelter Cove to Point Arena with Noyo Harbor the operating port that serves the fleet.

During the past two seasons (2015-16 and 2016-17), the opening of the Dungeness crab fishery has been delayed by elevated levels of domoic acid in crab viscera. Resource and Health Agency officials have rallied to keep public safe while trying to accommodate workable commercial and sport fisheries.

Existing fishery regulations lack clarity resulting in confusion and frustration for the industry and consumers alike. A management proposal is being circulated among the commercial fleet that the Salmon Troller's Marketing Association (STMA) supports for Districts 6 & 7. This clear proposal will direct managers how to proceed in the event of domoic acid and other similar incidents.

There are three elements to this proposal:

- 1) In the event of a delayed opening for any reason in the Dungeness crab season in District 6 or 7, these Districts will be considered as one management zone. Any delay will continue until the cause of delay is resolved or until January 15, whichever comes first. Fishing will commence on January 16 in as much area as possible as determined by the Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), after consultation with industry representatives.
- 2) Initially the entire management zone will be afforded effort shift protection for thirty (30) days from any person or vessel that has previously fished Dungeness crab during the current season in any other waters of California, Oregon, or Washington. Furthermore, any area that remains delayed after January 15 will be afforded effort shift protection for thirty (30) days after that area(s) opens. Effort shift protection will expire thirty (30) days after the opening date of fishing in any delayed area(s), respectively.
- 3) Upon opening of any area, normal preset times will be afforded in advance of any opening date for that area.

The STMA members are **unanimous** in their support of the three (3) elements of this proposal.

In addition the STMA membership is concerned that the Dungeness Crab Task Force Members consider and uphold the unanimous request of the association to implement the three (3) element proposal. The STMA is **unanimous** in our belief that this proposal will return normalcy to the fishery when abnormal circumstances arise while benefiting the majority of fishers, processors and consumers alike.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

William Forkner

William Forkner
President

Cc: Tom Weseloh
Craig Shuman
Sonke Mastrup
Dungeness Crab Task Force