



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Marine Region
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



July 19, 2018

John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Funding to Implement Onboard Electronic Monitoring in Support of an Experimental Box Crab Fishery

Dear Secretary Laird:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) supports the authorization of funding by the Ocean Protection Council (Council) to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) to coordinate implementation of electronic monitoring systems on vessels participating in a box crab experimental gear permit (EGP) research program.

The lack of biological data and rapid increase in the incidental harvest of box crab in recent years led the Department to recommend, and the California Fish and Game Commission to consider, a limit on incidental take to prevent unsustainable harvest. In conjunction with the recommendation to curtail incidental take, the Department is developing a proposal for an EGP research program to evaluate the potential for box crab to be a viable fishery.

Technological advancements in electronic monitoring have the potential to efficiently provide managers with high quality data on target catch and bycatch. Support for this project will allow the Department, with assistance from PSMFC, to employ electronic monitoring tools to investigate the sustainability of a target box crab fishery and test a variety of options to provide guidance on future implementation of electronic monitoring tools in other contexts. This project represents an effort to support fishing communities by exploring new fishing opportunities, specifically through a potential box crab fishery and more broadly by evaluating the potential for electronic monitoring tools to improve the efficiency of data collection for California fisheries.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (916) 445-6459 or Craig.Shuman@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Craig Shuman, D. Env.
Marine Regional Manager

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

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