

March 1, 2010

Secretary Lester Snow  
Natural Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Snow:

I am writing in support of the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC) creation and implementation of the Sustainable Seafood Initiative as directed by Assembly Bill (AB) 1217 (Monning).

As you are fully aware, AB 1217 requires the OPC to develop and implement a voluntary sustainable seafood promotion program. The measure requires the following four outcomes be completed: 1) Develop a protocol to guide entities on how to be independently certified to internationally accepted standards for sustainable seafood; 2) Implement a marketing assistance program for such seafood in cooperation with the Department of Food and Agriculture; 3) Develop a competitive grant and loan program to help fisheries become certified as sustainable when funded by the legislature; and 4) Design a label or labels that may be used exclusively to identify seafood caught in California.

California fisheries are at the nexus of a marketing opportunity. Local commercial fisheries continue to survive in an age of increased regulation, reduced access to fisheries, and closures to historic fishing habitats. Surviving these challenges presents an opportunity for the fishing industry to highlight the vitality and viability of our local waters. As our society works to reduce our carbon footprint, local California fishermen (and women) are providing our cities, counties, state, and nation locally caught sustainable seafood.

As a state, we have an obligation to increase our competitiveness with international commercial fishing industries. If we do not help our local commercial fishing industries compete, they will fall by the wayside. It would be an economic and environmental tragedy to rely on seafood imported from countries that do not have the same regulations and environmental protections that Californians request and promote.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my support for the Sustainable Seafood Initiative and express my continued interest in collaborating with the Ocean Protection Council to create a viable sustainable seafood promotion program.

Sincerely,



JONATHAN M. HARDY  
Senior District Consultant  
Office of State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny