

**April 21, 2008**

**To: Interested stakeholders in discussions concerning Dungeness Crab management in California**

**From: David Crabbe, consultant to Environmental Defense Fund**

**Re: Report on April 14 Crab meeting held in Ukiah**

---

This report is meant to keep all interested crab fishermen up to date on discussions about potential improvements to the management of the crab fishery. Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) hosted a fourth crab steering committee meeting on April 14 in Ukiah, following from discussions at the earlier steering committee meetings. We welcome input from meeting participants if there are changes that need to be made to this report to more accurately reflect discussion and decisions that were made at the meeting.

The purposes of this meeting were to:

- 1. Give updates since the last steering committee meeting (pp 2-3)**
- 2. Discuss and approve draft 'by-laws' of a crab advisory committee (p3 and attached doc)**
- 3. Start a discussion of management issues within the full steering committee, with the clear understanding that there must be agreement from the steering committee for any issue to be covered in proposed legislation (pp 4)**

A summary of next steps, then notes on each of these items is given below.

**Next steps:**

- Steering committee representatives should continue to discuss process so far with ports to keep all informed of progress - David and EDF representatives will make every effort to attend port meetings if invited to attend
- EDF to arrange presentation on other CA fishery advisory body examples by at least CDFA Marketing Branch, possibly additional speakers
- EDF to work with DFG on data needs to assist with both process (advisory body) and management discussions  
To be resolved:
  - High and low production split per port
  - Groundtruth # seats for representation
- EDF will coordinate with steering committee volunteers on revisions of draft 'by-laws' to bring to next steering committee meeting
- **Next meetings target dates: May 7<sup>th</sup>, if needed May 21st, and June 4th**

**Meeting participants**

Aaron Newman  
Billy Debacker  
Chris Lawson  
Craig Gaucher  
Geoff Bettencourt  
John Tarentino  
John Yearwood (Buzz)  
Kenny Graves  
Larry Collins  
Paddy Davis

Paul Wedell  
Pete Leipzig, FMA  
Randy Smith  
Tommy Ancona  
Vince Doyle  
Zeke Grader, PCFFA  
David Crabbe  
Johanna Thomas, EDF  
Maggie Ostdahl, EDF

## **1. Updates since the last steering committee meeting on March 20**

**EDF gave a brief overview of Senate policy committee hearing April 8** (confirmed later by Brett Williams who was available and briefly teleconferenced around 1pm)

- The placeholder bill passed 5-3. Four letters were submitted either opposing, or ‘supporting with amendment’ which is recorded as opposition, from NOAA Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association, Crab Boat Owners Association, and Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Association.
- After a long discussion, there was general agreement that the crab steering committee is developing into a forum with potential to build trust among crab fishermen on common goals, while recognizing that a variety of opinions or opposing viewpoints regarding the crab fishery definitely exist.
- The steering committee discussion reiterated the statement made by Brett Williams of Senator Wiggins’ office regarding SB 1690; the placeholder language will be amended based on decisions by the full steering committee - nothing goes into the bill without agreement by the full steering committee. This steering committee is meeting to develop a formal representative advisory body and have it recognized by the state; and to make the good faith attempt to discuss a variety of management concerns to see if/where there is any consensus on issues.
- There was willingness to continue to work constructively to move forward on resolving a structure for a formal crab advisory body, and on discussing management issues relevant to the fishery. There was agreement that individual steering committee participants should bring concerns to the steering committee process rather than take individual actions that could negatively impact further progress.

### **Brief clarification of the potential role of OPC to this process**

- EDF suggested the steering committee consider brainstorming a proposal to OPC (request for funding) – assuming that the bill goes through and creates a crab industry advisory body. Such

a proposal could include such things as research, data collection, permit buyback, etc. This is the type of the thing that OPC may like to see given the involvement of fishermen, the department, and a conservation org.

## **2. Discuss and approve Draft 'by-laws'**

**Please see attached draft for section-by-section notes.**

The attached draft was put together by EDF based on areas of agreement at the March 20 crab steering committee meeting. This draft is being used by the crab steering committee to determine the critical points and necessary specifics to include in enabling language for a Dungeness Crab Advisory body.

A few general points from this steering committee discussion include:

- Potential for self-funding mechanism to keep the advisory body going
- Attention to other advisory body models or approaches from state or federal government
- Enabling language should strike a balance – enough detail so decision-makers and agencies can't ignore this advisory body, but allow for flexibility as well
- Need more clarification and resolution from the Department for data questions

### **3. Start discussion of management issues – brainstorming only**

In the last hour of this meeting, the steering committee brainstormed a list of management issues and ideas that would be relevant for a formal crab advisory body to tackle fully.

The following is a 'laundry list' of these issues and ideas:

- Declaration of pots (# owned and/or # expected to fish in a season)
- Logbooks
- Unique ID for CA Dungeness crab permits
- Effects to CA of crab buyback in WA (tied to latency concerns in CA)
- Pot limit
- 30 day fair-start/ 'pick your area'
- IFQs
- Area management by district
- Change Pt Arena boundary for WA fair start provision
- Trip limits
- Uniform start date
- Price negotiation (statewide)
- Enforcement of current regulations – including soak time; gear still in water after July 15
- Pre-set time
- Trap hauling
- Length of season – set decades ago; how is it now relative to fishing power the industry has developed to
- Evaluate the pre-season sampling program/ shell testing
- Latent capacity in CA
- Control dates
- Escape hatch self-destruct “study” called for by the Commission – unresolved

The two main areas of discussion were in regards to improved fishery data needs, and the topic of a pot limit. Improved fishery data collection would need to address cost and accuracy concerns, but could be useful for a variety of reasons (e.g. establishing the value of the fishery relative to other uses of the ocean; reliable estimate of current gear; etc). Likewise, the discussion surrounding pot limits included concerns of administrative and enforcement costs, as well as latency of fishing effort. If a pot limit program were to be put in place, there are many potential ways to design it (e.g. temporary for early opener; tiered limits statewide; formulated based on catch history; transferable limits; voluntary moratorium; etc). Many steering committee participants think that some sort of pot limit is necessary, but must be equitable.