

May 23, 2008

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

From: David Crabbe, consultant to Environmental Defense Fund

Re: Report on May 21 Crab meeting held in Ukiah

This report is intended 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 final crab steering committee meeting on May 21 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 purpose of the meeting was to review the Crab Strawman Proposal and attempt to reach consensus on representation for the Crab Advisory Committee and recommendations for how to address short term management. The steering committee as a whole discussed the Strawman and some general modifications were made (attached). The steering committee then discussed unresolved issues and generated ideas in breakout groups, each made up of voices from Northern and Southern ports. Finally, the steering committee re-convened to evaluate those issues and ideas.

There was no consensus on representation or addressing short-term management, so EDF will follow up with steering committee members one last time on the Strawman, and then submit a status report on the outcomes of the steering committee discussions to Senator Wiggins, the author of SB 1690.

Key Outcomes

- All steering committee participants agreed that control date of July 15, 2008 is necessary and would pertain to any future new regulations in the fishery.
- A substantial number of participants would like to see a formal Dungeness Crab advisory body formed, depending on the structure of that committee
- More than half of the steering committee could agree to the committee structure proposed in the straw man. Other participants would prefer some combination of the following changes to the straw man:
 - reducing one member seat from the South;
 - using average production of ports (between median # boats and 50% production) to divide upper and lower tiers of production
 - increasing to a ¾ majority decision vote on the advisory body.
- Most participants would like more data on the landings patterns of the Non-Resident California permits, along with the average production of other homeport boats beyond the sample shown.
- Within breakout groups, participants proposed the following:
 - Establishing a coastwide season opener
 - Establishing a temporary (w/ sunset) early season 300-pot limit for the first two weeks or until the rest of the coast opens
 - Establishing a legislative deadline of May 2009 for a Dungeness crab advisory body to make recommendations addressing early season management
 - Evaluation of excess capacity

- Economic evaluation of the importance of the early season

Next steps

- EDF to work with steering committee to obtain and circulate further data
- David to poll steering committee participants next week by phone
- EDF to submit status report to Senator Wiggins by June 1

Appendix – Sample ‘active’ seasonal production

To aid in the discussion, steering committee participants had been asked to generate lists of boats associated with their port. The following chart was a sample generated from one such list, and available for this meeting, to show seasonal production by ‘active’ vessels (the steering committee had earlier proposed those landing above an average of 5000lbs per season). The data was queried for 3 seasons so the below shows vessels whose production totaled at least 15,000lbs over 3 seasons.

04/05 through 06/07 season average Fort Bragg vessel Dungeness crab landings - 29 active vessels

