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Valerie Termini, Executive Director
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-4899
www.fgc.ca.gov

Fish and Game Commission



Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
Since 1870

COASTAL FISHING COMMUNITIES DISCUSSION

OCTOBER 18, 2017 MEETING SUMMARY

Southern Coast – Ventura

The following is a summary of the meeting as prepared by staff. Input from participants on questions posed in the agenda is captured in bulleted format below each question.

Meeting Goals

- Identify priorities for your fishing community
- Discuss challenges and opportunities facing fishing communities
- Discuss how the Commission can contribute to more resilient fishing communities

1. Welcome, Background, and Goals

Commission Executive Director Valerie Termini convened the meeting at the E.P. Foster Library in Ventura at 4:00 p.m. There were over 21 people in attendance. Commission staff provided a welcome, introduced Commission and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) staff, reviewed meeting ground rules, and introductions were made around the room. A brief background on the coastal fishing communities discussion was presented, and the meeting goals and structure were identified.

2. In-depth Discussion and Dialogue

(A) What are the biggest challenges to a successful fishing/ocean-dependent industry in your area? (e.g., infrastructure, limited seasons/catch, complexity of regulations, etc.)

- Seasonal closures limiting access to markets
- Cheap foreign fish are brought in for live fish market
- Challenges with directing/alternative marketing access
- Lack of clarity in permits and licenses involved in direct markets
- Decreased business profitability with increased fish taxes

- Retaining docking and shoreside access within ports and harbors
- Redevelopment processes that reduce commercial and recreational fishing to the harbor (e.g., Channel Islands Harbor)
 - Fishing is a low priority for budget with the California Coastal Commission (CCC)
 - They are not taking the California Coastal Act requirements to maintain commercial fishing harbor space and facilities in harbors (Public Resources Code Section 30703)
- Small communities have a difficult time advocating for their access needs
- Moratorium on commercial abalone fishing continues to have impacts
- Commission rejection of possible commercial abalone fishery at San Miguel Island
- Climate change impacts
 - Loss of habitat (e.g., decline in kelp forest ecosystems)
- Coastal erosion
- Increased fishing fees reduces fishing opportunities
- Difficulty in establishing an aquaculture farm
- Increased harbor business costs
- Lack of money to dredge harbor mouth due to decline in fisheries landings volume
- Difficult for new fisherman to access permits
- Conflicting regulations between federal and state laws for shark fins
- Difficulty in making permit transfers
- Data gaps in fishery management (e.g., lack of lingcod data)
- Difficulty in determining legal recreational sheephead size when lengths shrink after being filleted
- Lack of storage for boats and equipment due to coastal gentrification and repurposing of storage warehouses

(B) Fisheries and port conditions have changed over the past 20 years. What do you want your port to look like 20 years from now?

- The Commission to interact with the CCC to strengthen local ports
 - Zoning for self-marketing
 - Coastal-dependent storage use for boats and equipment
- Diversified local fishery sources and reliable port infrastructure
 - More commercial fisheries, such as a small commercial abalone fishery open at San Miguel Island or other islands where the stock has rebound
 - Possible shellfish aquaculture if in synergy with continued commercial fisheries; together these can support reliable port infrastructure

(C) What policies or new regulations would you like to see the Commission develop to help you meet future goals?

- Encourage access to direct marketing/alternative marketing and incorporate into fishery management plans (FMPs)
- Streamline licensing involved in direct marketing
- Address infrastructure needs and zoning within harbors
- Clarify FGC engagement and interagency permitting process for new aquaculture ventures in State waters
- Implement artificial reefs to increase fish habitat and mitigate erosion
- Make permit transfers easier for young fishermen
 - Non-transferrable permits should be returned to the entity and reissued to another fisherman when no longer utilized
- 12-month from date of purchase sport fishing license
- Increase species in hatcheries for release into ocean (e.g., California halibut brood stock)
- Increase stability and local control
 - Permits tied to ports
 - Spatial management for equity in access
- Owner-operated fishing
- Avoid consolidation of fishing access
- Community permit banks to purchase permits
- Limit time (sunrise to sunset) for sea cucumber and for ridgeback prawn trawl fishing to protect the resource
- Reconsider experimental commercial abalone fishery for San Miguel Island as a test case for new approaches

3. Next Steps and Wrap-up

Commission staff provided a brief recap of what was learned from the meeting and explained that these meetings will be continued up and down the coast in order to learn more about the regional challenges faced by fishing communities. Staff thanked meeting attendees for participating and explained that a meeting summary will be posted to the Commission website (www.fgc.ca.gov).

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.