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LOBSTER FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

CARLSBAD PUBLIC MEETING APRIL 19, 2012

INFORMAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS SUMMARY

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES

*As stated by DFG at the beginning of the meeting, these proceedings have been summarized and are not a verbatim transcript of what was said at the meeting.

Question: I know the goal of the FMP is to enhance the lobster fishery, but what kind of regulations are you considering?

> Response: DFG does not have a predetermined plan. The fishery is not necessarily broken, but it may need improvement. In the commercial fishery, we have heard concerns about a lot of gear in the water and transferability. We have not decided on anything. One of the things our researchers are doing is looking at lobster fisheries all over the world and seeing how they are managed and if those techniques would work here. The FMP must contain the information outlined in the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA), but we are going to listen to you, the constituents, to determine the issues and concerns that need to be discussed and considered.

Question: Who is the OPC and why do we have to take money from them?

> Response: The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) coordinates ocean protection actions in California. They are an oversight agency that coordinates what government agencies do with regard to the ocean. Lobster was identified as a high priority for a FMP by the Department, but we realized we did not have a budget to support the effort. Reaching out to OPC for supplemental funding bolstered our existing resources. We are pleased with the partnership and what it is allowing us to do, and we hope this can be a model for the development of future FMPs.

Question: Is there a separate meeting for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a closed door meeting?

Response: There are two public meetings being held with the same content presented at each. The first one was in Oxnard on April 18th. There are no separate meetings being held, closed door or otherwise.

Question: I am a focused partner, but with you sitting up there and me sitting back here I do not feel like this is a partnership. You are framing the issues and setting the agenda we are not doing it together in partnership.

Response: Our facilitation team is currently conducting a telephone assessment with key people inside the lobster industry and out. They are asking these individuals for their input, concerns, interests and opinions about the spiny lobster fishery, FMP, and the Lobster Advisory Committee. Hopefully this addresses your concerns.

Question: What is the process for getting on the Lobster Advisory Committee (LAC)?

Response: Go to our website online at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/lobsterfmp/application.asp to apply. We asked several questions: Why do you want to be on the committee? What group do you want to represent? What other advisory groups or issue groups have you participated in? We will look at all the applications and pick the best ones. We may also be conducting focus groups on specific issues that need to be further developed.

Question: Will DFG select the members of the LAC?

Response: Yes the Marine Region staff will select the LAC. It is our responsibility. You cannot be on the committee it you are a poacher. We want people who represent their constituency group, not their personal agenda. If you have ideas about how to do this let us know.

Question: We have been filling out report cards. Are the results of the report card data available?

Response: Yes, lobster report card data is on the Lobster FMP website at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/lobsterfmp/lit.asp

Question: Why was lobster picked as the species for the fishery management planning (FMP) process?

Response: As an agency we went through a great deal of work, going through the Master plan. Admittedly, it is old. We looked at all the fisheries, and which ones would be good candidates. Some fisheries were mandated to have plans in the MLMA. Afterwards, it was left to the Department. During internal prioritizations, lobster kept coming up as number one. Some of the considerations were that it is an important fishery, state managed (as opposed to

federally managed), and of fairly significant size. It was also helpful that is was a Southern California fishery. This makes it easier to tackle (and less expensive) than a statewide species.

Question: Where does OPC get their money?

Response: The funds that are going to this process are public bond funds specifically from Proposition 84: The Clean Water, Parks and Coastal Protection Act, which the tax payers adopted in 2006.

Question: Why are we in such a rush to conduct a process that has such important and far reaching impacts?

Response: We want to have the meetings during the off season, so we waited until the season closed to begin and we only have the window before October to finish the first phase of public and Lobster Advisory Committee (LAC) meetings.

Question: When I sign-up for the LAC, what am I signing up for? Is my travel compensated? When are the meetings?

Response: The meetings are during the day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mileage is reimbursed at the state rate. We do have some limitations in what we can provide. We cannot give you anything a state employee cannot receive.

INFORMAL COMMENTS

- Dr. Tony Koslow: The CalCOFI program has been monitoring the waters from Point Conception to San Diego since 1951. They conduct a large scale survey four times a year. They have obtained funding for a paper on a time series of California spiny lobster phyllosoma (= larval lobster), looking at abundance and how it relates to the changing ocean conditions. The assessments that have been done provide the opportunity to update fishery independent data for the species.

- I called about the 30 recreational fishermen and they saw this as some new regulation that the government was trying to ram down their throats. There is a lot of fear out there and people do not know what the FMP actually is. There is a need for more outreach and the more transparency the better. My board and club will put out as much information as possible to explain what an FMP is, what the process and the purpose is. The lack of information out there needs to be addressed.

- I support more regulations for lobster fishing. Population is the number one pressure on the earth. The increase of people and their impact on the fishery calls for an increase in regulations.

- I am concerned with the lack of data from the recreational fishery and the 14% return rate of lobster cards. How do we tap into the volunteers to obtain more data (i.e.:

Surfriders)? A lot of people are diving and fishing, can we tap into this resource to improve data collection?

- A lot of peoples' fears are based on the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) process. A lot of people were unhappy with the MLPA process. It is viewed as a compromise, and many people were very dissatisfied with the outcome. I want to see something that everyone is happy with for the FMP process. There is an MPA right off the coast from here, what will happen to that?

- This is very reminiscent of the first MLPA meeting. Transparency is not the most important part of the process. I do not want to feel heard, I want to be heard. I do not want to feel like my comments fell into a black hole. I want to know that my comments were heard.

- I am interested in an upper size limit, a slot limit. These lobsters would be too large to fit into a commercial fisherman's trap. Lobsters that are 75 years old put out a lot more offspring, many more than a normal size lobster. How do people feel about a slot limit?

- When you create your LAC make sure you have representation from the various regions: Santa Barbara/Ventura counties, Orange County and San Diego. Fishing in these regions requires different equipment, and the conditions are extremely different as well. This has also become an export market. Make sure information gets to that sector so they can take part in the process.

- Matt Kay: It is okay that the DFG does not know what they want included in the FMP (aside from what is required) right now. It is not okay for them to be in this same place in six months or a year from now. They need some input. Some of the conversations I am having with fisherman in Santa Barbara is "What do you want your fishery to look like?" If the answer is, "What it looks like know," that is a valid answer. These questions help us find a starting point.

- I am not sure if DFG is selecting the members of the LAC without outside input suggests a partnership. I would prefer to have the opportunity to nominate someone from my group. If you have the best people with the most support from their constituents on the LAC it would make your process more viable. It would give you more buy-in.