

February 12, 2024

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

RE: CA Fish and Game Commission Agenda Item 8B: EFP (Commission ID# 2022-03; Sub Sea Sonics Pop-up Gear) major amendment request; and support for Ocean Protection Council Funding

Dear Secretary Crowfoot, President Sklar, Commissioners, and Council members:

We the undersigned California Dungeness crab fishermen are writing in support of approval and funding for our participation in the 2024 Sub Sea Sonics/Guardian Experimental Fishing Permit to commercially fish with pop-up gear attached to strings of up to 10 traps. Testing to date has demonstrated that the gear setup under the EFP is reliable, and this expanded EFP would allow a significant number of additional fishers to evaluate the gear first-hand under realistic fishing conditions. Given the recent Dungeness crab fishery closures, it is critical for us to have opportunities to continue crab fishing in the spring.

We ask the Commission to approve the amendment request to the Sub Sea Sonics EFP as recommended by CDFW. We request that the Ocean Protection Council dedicate a substantial portion of its remaining whale and sea turtle entanglement funding to provide reimbursements for fishers that purchase gear as part of the approved EFP, so that we can participate to the fullest extent possible.

This will help ensure fishmen have access to opportunities for a long-term sustainable and profitable fishery, while minimizing entanglement risk and supporting early adopters of new innovative technologies in California's fishing communities.

Sincerely,

Steve Melz, F/V Jacqueline L

Joseph Parks, F/V Misty Dawn

Brand Little, F/V Pale Horse

Justin Monckton, F/V Ava Mae

Matt Juanes, F/V Plumeria

Bob Monckton, F/V Judy Kay

Khevin Mellegers, F/V Areona

Gregg Tanji, F/V Sandy B

Tim Obert, F/V LULU

Valerie Phillips, F/V Aqua Leo

Cody Reed, F/V Stacey Jo

Shawn Flading, F/V Kvins

Jim Rando, F/V Misty Dawn

Bobby Bohannon, F/V Victoria

Mike Phillips, F/V Miss Alison

Scott Edson, F/V Genesis

Michael Cohen, F/V Eagle

Tommy Walsh, F/V Imperial

Frank Cunningham, F/V Carley Diane

Barry Day, F/V Rosella

cc. Jenn Eckerle, California Ocean Protection Council

Mike Esgro, California Ocean Protection Council

Katie Cieri, California Ocean Protection Council

Chuck Bonham, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Craig Shuman, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Eric Kord, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Melissa Miller-Henson, California Fish and Game Commission

Susan Ashcraft, California Fish and Game Commission