



COUNTY OF DEL NORTE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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April 11, 2017

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The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor
C/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, please accept this letter as Del Norte County's position on proposed increases to commercial fisheries landing fee rates designed to off-set the operating shortfall within the Fish and Game Preservation Fund (FGPF).

As you well know, commercial fisheries throughout California have been subject to considerable hardship over the last several years including prolonged drought, and the devastating effects on the Dungeness crab industry due in large part to algal bloom. Del Norte County's commercial fishing industry is a significant economic driver for our area and any additional financial burden at this time will have a negative effect on small businesses and individuals that depend on the commercial fishing industry. As noted by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), addressing the shortfall through the current proposal "...may be too large for the industry to sustain..." The proposal also adds new activities that exacerbate the FGPF's current imbalance.

Del Norte County commercial fisherman also have the issue of being adjacent to the State of Oregon where fisherman have a competitive advantage related to rules, fees and laws that are not comparable to California. This loss of landings to Oregon would have a significant impact on our local economy.

The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors understands there are costs associated with the services provided by the State department mandated to manage the industry, and fees have not been increased in a number of years. However, a 13,157% increase to the Dungeness crab rate (.0019 cents/lb. to .25 cents/lb.) is unfathomable, and increases to many other species landings are just as alarming. The basic question at this time is, how were the current proposed fee rates determined? There is no clear justification for the proposed fee rate increase and no available information that outlines the use of the landing fees as applied directly to various fisheries.

Del Norte County Board of Supervisors proposes the Governor's Office approach the California commercial fishing industry to discuss the proposed fee rate changes and develop a well justified and agreed upon rate structure that meets the needs of the industry as well as the State of California.

Sincerely,

Chris Howard, Chair
Board of Supervisors
Del Norte County, California

CC:
Honorable Mike McGuire, Senator
Honorable Jim Wood, Assemblyman