

Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife
Oversight Hearing
1324 Longworth House Office Building
May 8, 2019
10:00 am

Legislative Hearing on
H.R. 417, H.R. 1023, H.R. 1218, H.R. 1240, H.R. 1314, H.R. 1979, H.R. 2189, H.R. 2405, and
H.R. 2406

Questions from Rep. Tom McClintock for Mr. Bill Shedd

1. In your written submission to the Committee you state: “According to recent analysis done by the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s Highly Migratory Species Management Team, deep-set buoy gear has the potential to land far more swordfish than has recently been landed by drift gill nets.” Please provide the Committee with documentation to substantiate your statement.

Answer: Pacific Fishery Management Council, Highly Migratory Species Management Team Report on Deep-Set Buoy Gear Authorization – Range of Alternatives and Limited Entry Criteria, see tables 1 and 2, pp. 7-8, available at https://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/J4a_Supp_HMSMT_Rpt2_NOV2018BB.pdf.

2. You have stated the strong support of the recreational fishing sector for deep-set buoy gear. Does your support extend to “linked deep-set buoy gear”? Does your support cover however many deep-set buoy gear permits are necessary to make it an economically viable swordfish fishery?

Answer: The strong support recreational fishing support for DSBG applies directly to the conventional DSBG that has been developed since 2011 and proven itself to both be profitable to the commercial fisherman and safe for the environment with its focused take on swordfish. The “linked DSBG” is a relatively new concept that has not yet been fully developed and tested. If it does prove to be an effective means to harvest swordfish and does have a similar positive impact on the marine resource as does the current DSBG, then the “linked DSBG” would also receive support from the recreational fishing community. Regarding the number of DSBG permits, we believe that it is important to implement this new gear on a limited entry basis. Currently there have been some 50 DSBG permits already issued. Per the documentation shown above in the answer to your question 1., those 50 boats will be able to produce more than twice the volume of swordfish than the entire drift gillnet fleet has averaged over the last several years. And at a far higher price, will have an even greater economic impact. As it relates to the 17

active DGN boats and the volume of swordfish provided to the public those 50 permits will more than make the California swordfish fishery economically viable. Regarding the number of permits that should be issues, it is not known how many DSBG boats should be allowed to fish in order to both reduce potential conflicts with recreational anglers and harvest a reasonable number of swordfish for public consumption. The real answer to that can only be determined over time, but in the meantime, the current 50 permits will be more than enough to far exceed the economics associated with DGN.