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FISHING COMPANY, INC.

California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street
Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814
May 8, 2014

Commissioners,

I am writing to protest the efforts of the environmental crisis industry in their attempts to lower the Pacific Herring quotas in Humboldt, Crescent City and Tomales Bay to zero – effectively closing these fisheries.

First some background, I am a full time career commercial fisherman, 64 years old, with an educational background in Marine Biology and Ichthyology. I began fishing herring in Humboldt Bay in 1975 (the first person to fish herring there since WWII), and continued until 2006 when our local freezer plant closed. During this time I also bought and processed the majority of fish landed in Humboldt Bay and Crescent City for export to Japan. I have also served on the Director's Herring Advisory Committee since its inception by Charlie Fullerton.

The Humboldt Bay and Crescent City Fisheries are the most conservative herring fisheries in the state. Fishermen here have continued to use 2 1/4 inch mesh gear by choice, in spite of the fact that further south the department has allowed smaller mesh gear to harvest younger herring. In our areas, two thirds of the fish in any given school pass right through 2 1/4 inch mesh nets. The average herring caught in this gear is 20 cm standard length- generally 5 year olds and up.

Fishermen in this area also voluntarily petitioned Fish and Game to close the month of December and a portion of January (in Crescent City) to herring fishing because of mixed fish stocks.

All that being said, all fisheries in the world are totally market driven. **No Market=No Fishery** In the case of Crescent City and Humboldt Bay, the closing of Eureka Ice and Cold Storage in 2007 effectively put an end to the Roe Herring fishing in these two bays. The closest freezer plant capable of freezing our fish is Bellingham, Washington . Because of the changing demographics in Japan and the resulting lowered demand for Herring Roe, the market will not support any additional expenses incurred to process and ship this product and still remain profitable.

There are two immediate viable outlets for herring in our area. They are the market for “bait herring” and the human consumption market. Unfortunately in Humboldt and Crescent City it is illegal to take herring in these two bays for any purpose other than for the Roe Market. Because of this there has been no take of Pacific herring in these permitted fisheries. Without a viable market, no one will catch this fish.

On the bright side, the herring stocks in these areas have had an eight year rest. While quotas in these areas have always been very conservative, the lack of market and subsequent limited fishing effort cannot be a legitimate reason for closing these fisheries. Fishermen are typically blamed if they

fish and blamed again if they don't fish. If a lot of fish gets caught then the response is “they are raping the resource”. If fishermen don't land the fish (for any number of reasons) then they say “look – no landings, there must not be any fish left!”

By attempting to close these bays, Oceana and the rest of that crew will be able to generate more P.R. to increase financial donations into their coffers only to continue to attack all the work that California Fish and Wildlife biologists have done to successfully manage these fisheries over the last 40 years! Please – continue to base your decisions on sound scientific fact and resist the public relation barrage spewing from pseudo—environmentalists.

Sincerely,



Ken Bates

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F/V Ironic

Eureka, CA 95502

