

March 12, 2015

Capt. Manny Gorgita

Santa Barbara, CA

Mr. Jack Bayliss, President,
And Commissioners,
Executive Director Sonke Mastrup
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

RE: LOBSTER TRAP PERMIT TRANSFERABILITY

Dear President Bayliss, Commissioners, and Director Mastrup:

I am writing to you today to forward a proposal that may untie a knot in the permit transferability features envisioned under the developing California Lobster Management Plan. After speaking with the Marine Subcommittee staff last week, it was suggested I follow up with a letter to the Commission.

Here is the crux of my proposal. I believe that a large number of the 50 existing nontransferable permit holders will be ready and willing to pay considerably more than the standard permit fee to secure a “tier-2” lobster trap that is transferable, rather than non-transferable. Each willing participant (there are about 50 of these permittees right now) in this program would pay up to \$10,000 for a one-time opportunity to fund the Department to develop and execute a nontransferable to transferable permit program for all those who wish to do so.

I have been canvassing the docks, and have witnessed a high degree of interest in this way of getting past our impasse related to the non-transferability of our permits. The reason for this is that a transferable permit enhances the value of our fishing business in a way that a nontransferable one simply cannot. Our boats, when we’re ready to sell or get out of the business, are a better prospect for buyers if they know they have permits to fish along with the boat.

The other economic side of this relates to financial woes at the Department. As these non-transferable permits lapse over the next decade or so, the Department loses annual fees and landings tax revenues from this attrition, which could also amount to hundreds of thousand of dollars with lobster at ex-vessel prices of \$24.50.

Finally, if California is to have a sustainable lobster fishery well into the future, we not only need a sustainable lobster population (which the FMP and Southern California MPAs address), but we need young fishermen to enter the fishery, buy these permits to land the lobster. None of us existing permittees is getting any younger.

We believe that our proposal will be of benefit to the fishery, the Department, and future generations. Please direct staff to contact me at your earliest opportunity to discuss this further. I can be reached at the above letterhead address, by phone at (805) 453-3535, or by email at jrgorgita@aol.com.

Sincerely,

/signed/

Manny Gorgita

C: Ms. Susan Ashcraft, Commission Marine Subcommittee Consultant
Mr. Craig Shuman, DFW Marine Region Manager