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December 12, 2014

Manuel Gorgita, Jr. II
F/V Vincent G
[redacted]

Mr. Michael Sutton, President
And Commissioners
California Fish and Game Commission
1419 9th Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SIMPLIFY THE DRAFT LOBSTER MANAGEMENT PLAN: PERMIT TRANSFERABILITY

Dear President Sutton:

Over the course of a number of hearings that agendized the development of the Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan, we have heard several commissioners tell the Department to "keep it simple." One simplifying move would be to ensure that both "tiers" of permits are transferable, instead of one status for "A" permits and another for "B."

I represent a number of lobster permittees that will fall into the "B" category. Here is what we propose: Make A permits transferable with a 300 trap limit. Make B permits transferable with a 200 trap limit. This simplifies the Lobster FMP greatly, and makes sense from a number of perspectives, including enforcement, business planning, and fishery management. It also makes the Lobster FMP consonant with (and simpler than) the recent Dungeness Crab Fishery modifications, in which there are actually 7 permit tiers (based on number of traps) that are all transferable.

The benefits of simplifying in this way are multiple. First, from a resource perspective, a 200-trap limit on B permits would reduce the maximum effort by 5100 traps (there are 51 potential B-permits, some of whom have been fishing lobster off and on for over 30 years). Also, if the B permits are made non-stackable, this eliminates one source of economic concentration so prevalent in the ITQ management process. Second, from a finance perspective, the Department stands to gain 51 transfer permit fees. "A" permits are currently being transferred freely (and eventually will see stacking via multiple permits fishing one boat). From a fishing business perspective, a transferable B permit makes the fishing vessel easier to sell when a fisherman retires, dies, or decides to step out of the industry.

It's been said that the Lobster FMP development process has been "transparent." Perhaps it has from the A permit side, but we have actually heard from Department staff "we've been told not to talk about transferability of B permits." So our voice has fallen on deaf ears in the FMP process. "A" permittees aren't interested in our wellbeing, and the Department refuses to listen to us as well. Hence, this letter to

the Commission, whose members have often supported permit transferability and told the Department to keep the Lobster FMP simple.

To sum up, we request that the Commission direct the Department to simplify the Draft Lobster Fishery Management Plan as follows:

1. A permits transferable with a 300 trap maximum
2. B permits transferable with a 200 trap maximum, non-stackable.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions about any of the above, please do not hesitate to have Commission staff contact me (805) 453-3535. I would be happy to discuss simplifying the Lobster FMP plan with you or your staff.

Sincerely,

Manuel Gorgita

c: Commissioner Richard Rogers
Commissioner Jim Kellogg
Commissioner Jack Baylis
Commissioner Jacque Hostler-Carmesin