

Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture Crab Hearing – March 21, 2019

Talking Points, California Dungeness Crab Task Force

Provided by Rachelle Fisher, Strategic Earth Consulting and DCTF Administrator

Introduction

- Good afternoon, my name is Rachelle Fisher and I serve as an administrator of the California Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF).
- Thank you for the opportunity to provide this annual update to the committee on behalf of the DCTF.

DCTF Meeting and Key Highlights

- The DCTF last met on June 5-6, 2018 where they approved of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) proposed draft lost fishing gear recovery program Title 14 regulations, expressed support for Senate Bills (SB) 1309 and 1310, provided recommendations for CDFW's proposed surface gear set up regulations, and provided guidance to CDFW for the 2018 Tri-State Dungeness Crab Committee meeting.
- The DCTF Executive Committee met in August 2018 to continue discussions on priority topics, especially those related to gear servicing requirements.
- In October, the facilitation team, in partnership with CDFW, visited ports from Avila to Crescent City to learn about interests specific to the Dungeness crab industry and share updates on the DCTF and priority issues.
- As you know, SB 1310 requires an update to the makeup of the DCTF based on DCTF recommendations. Following the passage of the urgency bill last year, CDFW and the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) began the process of DCTF elections, which have not been conducted since 2009.
 - Since SB 1310 requires the elections to be completed in a staggered fashion, half the commercial Dungeness crab ports will have an election this year and the other half will occur next year.
 - We expect the solicitation for the first round of elections - which are expected to focus on the port complexes of Crescent City, Trinidad, Fort Bragg, San Francisco, and the ports south of Half Moon Bay - to go out by the first week of April, with the goal to have these elections completed in the summer.
 - Elections in the other half of the commercial ports (nonresident, Eureka, Bodega Bay and Half Moon Bay) will be held in early 2020.

- Currently, CDFW and the OPC are working through state budgeting and contracting processes to secure support for DCTF administration and facilitation support beyond April 1, 2019, which is when the current administration/facilitation contract with Strategic Earth ends. Through SB 1310, funds from the Dungeness Crab Account will be used to support DCTF operations, as funds are available. The intention is to confirm DCTF administrative support in a timely manner so the DCTF can reconvene, ideally, once elections are complete.
- DCTF Members, fishermen, and others continue to identify priority topics for the DCTF to address in the short and longer-term, which includes topics related to reducing the risk of entanglements in the Dungeness crab industry, and the efforts of the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group; domoic acid and evisceration orders; season openers, etc.
 - These topics will be tracked by the agencies and considered for discussion during future DCTF meetings, once elections are complete and available funding and the administration of the DCTF is confirmed.

Closing

- The DCTF is grateful to Senator McGuire, Assemblymember Stone, and the committee for your efforts to support the DCTF over the years especially through SB 1309 and 1310. The DCTF also thanks OPC and CDFW for their fiscal and administrative support.
- On behalf of the DCTF and the DCTF Admin Team I would like to thank Chair McGuire and the Joint Committee for the opportunity to speak today.
- On behalf of myself and my colleague Kelly Sayce, Strategic Earth is deeply thankful for the opportunity to work with the DCTF over the last decade. We look forward the continuation of the DCTF's meaningful work in the near-term and beyond.
- I am available if you have any questions. Deborah Halberstadt and Paige Berube from OPC are also in the audience and available for questions.
- Thank you.

For more information about the DCTF, including all meeting summaries and reports, please visit the DCTF webpage: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/2009/04/dungeness-crab-task-force>.