

To The Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus:

I have received a copy of your letter dated Dec. 6/06 to the Minister of Fisheries. Though I can appreciate your concerns for the economic hardships this Integrated Fishing Plan places on the commercial fishing fleet, it would surprise me if you really understood just how difficult it is for industry to perform the ongoing and ever changing requirements of this plan.

You have stated that there is intense criticism of the Integrated Fishing Plan, but that there is overall industry support. This statement in itself is somewhat contradictory, and I think you will understand that industry cannot be fully aware of the consequences, requirements and costs of this plan until the results of the first year are accounted for.

I also appreciate your acknowledgement that there is a lack of proper stock assessment. It is industry's position that stock estimates, which are based on the best scientific information available, (that being fishermen's opinions and IPHC survey's), support that the TAC's are set far below a safe or precautionary level.

My understanding is that the conservation representation on the CGIAC, refused to participate in the process over issues of unresolved access to data. If this is the case then you already have equal status, as the fishing industry is also uninformed with respect to the transparency of advisors and the process. The only possible way we will achieve what we all want is to eliminate the partnership with DFO. If instead of lobbying the department you started working directly with industry we would have stock assessment resources, habitat protection and sustainable fishing grounds.

I have attached a copy of the Integrated Fishing Plan and a copy of an EM (Electronic Monitoring) Report. Please understand that many participants in this industry do not have or operate a computer. This Integrated Fishing Plan does not assess stock, instead it causes individuals that have never fished, or in many cases have never caught certain species to now target these species. It also requires a tremendous amount of paperwork to cover species leasing and transfers.

Ironically, catches of the species which are supposedly of concern, are far below the conservative TAC's, and the catch of the targeted species, in this case halibut, has been exceeded and current mortalities are coming out of next year's quota allocation.

If you as members of the Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus wish to conserve and protect eco-systems and ultimately the fisheries resources, you should invest your time in working together with those in industry that have the same goals, not those that want to control.

Gerald Dalum
Fishing For Freedom