

Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
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May 4, 2004

Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, suite 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814

Terry Tamminen, Secretary for Environmental Protection
California Environmental Protection Agency
1001 I St., 25th Floor Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretaries Chrisman and Tamminen,

Please accept the following as testimony to the California Ocean Summit:

Our organization, the Alliance for Communities for Sustainable Fisheries (ACSF), has been organized to represent the economic, social, and cultural interests of the recreational and commercial fishing industry in the geographic region from Port San Luis (Avila Beach) to Pillar Point Harbor in San Mateo County. As the name implies, we are committed to the preservation of sustainable fisheries and link fishing activities with the greater communities that support our industry. Resolutions supporting the efforts of the ACSF have been adopted by the city councils of Monterey and Morro Bay, by the elected commissions of the San Mateo County, Moss Landing and Port San Luis Harbor Districts, and the Santa Cruz Port District.

Our organization hopes that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger will, on behalf of the people of the State of California, advance the following comments to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy regarding the Commission's preliminary report.

1. We believe this Commission should be congratulated on putting together a well-balanced report amid many competing special interest groups.
2. Our organization has for several years actively supported increased funding to achieve far better science in managing our nation's fisheries. A significant part of this would be to encourage cooperative research between experienced commercial fishermen and the science community. When fishermen spend 200 plus days on the water over a 30 or 40 year period, they tend to know something. Their experiential knowledge combined with the rigor of the academic community could yield a far superior field of knowledge for fishery management than presently exists.
3. A method of paying for increased science could be to charge a tax (10cents per pound) on all farm-raised salmon and other farm-raised ocean fishes sold in the United States. This money should be dedicated to increased science both on the federal and the state level.
4. Having studied the science behind marine protected areas (MPAs) quite carefully, we are encouraged by the U.S. Commission's view that they are one of many potentially useful management tools, but not a panacea for all the ocean's ills. There may well be a place for MPAs in the toolbox of both the conservationist and the fishery manager, but there is almost as much opportunity for MPAs, when applied as a broad brush tool, to cause more harm to the environment and resources than good. They must be used very carefully to avoid unintended consequences. Most important, they should be viewed as an experiment, and implemented in a phased manner, to offer time to study their results.
5. The people of the United States want to eat fish. Given a choice, they will choose fresh, local fish over imported or farm-raised products. Those people need to have a voice and be well represented in the public decision making process about fishery resources. Efforts to shut down fisheries "just because" and/or to view fishermen as evil destroyers of the environment should be resisted by decision-makers as irresponsible. We have more at stake in having sustainable fisheries than anyone else!
6. Our organization does have concern with the tone of the U.S. Commission's Draft Report. The Executive Summary portrays the ocean as being on the brink of complete crisis. It is our direct experience that this has been and can be true in some areas, for specific causes, but it is by no means true everywhere. In fact, West Coast

fisheries are by and large well managed. There will always be regulatory corrections that are made based on new data, but this is the way management works and it would be hard to find any other way of second guessing or pre-planning the ocean's natural cycles.