



BERING SEA FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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B S F R F

FORGING COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS IN THE BERING SEA

October 5, 2006

Doug DeMaster – Science & Research Director

Via email & USPS

Alaska Fisheries Science Center

National Marine Fisheries Service

7600 Sand Point Way N.E. Building 4

Seattle, WA 98115

Dear Doug:

We, in the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF), would like to express our concern and disappointment about the lack of full disclosure by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) regarding the data, information, models and rationale used in the Bering Sea crab TAC setting process for this year. The Alaska Fisheries Science Center as in the past shared the survey data as soon as the data verification process was completed and the data were transferred to ADFG but did not share the NMFS abundance estimates with BSFRF until after the TACs were announced by ADFG. This is a change from the previous two survey/fishery seasons which we regard as a backward step in efforts to shape a transparent process. We have worked cooperatively with NMFS and, to a large extent with ADFG, on our joint projects for the past several years. Our findings have been an open book to both agencies. We have neither delayed the release of our information, nor held back any portion of our findings.

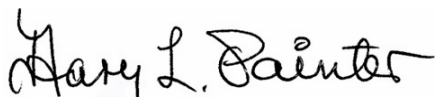
Now that the TACs are set, ADFG says that there are no options. In an open process the options would have been on the table for all to review and express their opinions prior to setting the annual TACs as intended by the MSFCMA. BSFRF was disappointed, because at a minimum the expected TACs could have been discussed more openly so they were better understood by industry. The TACs are lower than we had expected based on the limited

information provided by NMFS and ADFG. The industry needs timely, accurate information to use in its planning. Failure to provide that timely information seriously disadvantages industry and is costly for all involved in harvesting and processing this resource.

Lastly, the analysis of 2006 NMFS survey data commissioned by the BSFRF led us to different abundance estimates from those that were apparently used in determining the TACs. In an effort to understand how the managers came up with this year's quotas and to open up this process for the future, we respectfully request that you provide to the industry including BSFRF all the data, information, model results, rationale, and explanations that were used by NMFS and ADFG in the formation of the 2006/7 TACs announced by ADF&G.

We are eager to maintain and continue our cooperative partnership. We simply ask that we be considered full partners and that the crab management process be open to all for review and comment as required by MSFCMA.

Respectfully,



Gary Painter, President, BERING SEA FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

cc: Doug Mecum, Russ Nelson, Bill Hogarth, Stephanie Madsen, McKie Campbell, Denby Lloyd