



Fisheries and Oceans
Pêches et Océans

South Coast
3225 Stephenson Pt. Rd.
Nanaimo, B.C., V9T 1K3

04 February 2002

Elected Representatives, Prawn Sectoral Committee
Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association

Gentlemen:

Subject: Industry Proposal for Trap Allocation to the PPFA

We refer to the caucus meeting of November 29, 2001 and subsequent correspondence from Mike Cullen on behalf of the industry caucus, and from Brian Van Dorp on behalf of the Pacific Prawn Fishermen's Association.

The industry caucus and the Association have requested the Department to consider changes in the fishery, as follows:

1. Ministerial approval for the creation of a "W" licence in the limited entry fishery, such licence to be provided to the Association at the Minister's discretion, annually.
2. Reduction of the maximum traps which may be fished by each existing "W" licence, from the present limit of 300 to a new limit of 250.
3. The establishment of a trap limit for the licence provided to the Association, equivalent to the total trap reduction achieved among other licence holders.
4. Adoption of procedures that would permit licence holders to fish 300 traps (or 500 traps for stacked licences), if a fisher has made arrangements for a 50 trap transfer from the licence held by the Association.

The intent of the proposed change is to provide a means by which industry may become self supporting, generating revenue in a fair and equitable manner, available to the representative industry Association to support initiatives on behalf of all licence holders. We support the intent of the recommendation.

In making a proposal which would substantially alter the framework of the existing fishery, we are of the opinion that necessary consultation needs to occur between the proponents, and the individual licence holders who may be directly affected.

The Department's position is that support for the proposed measure would best and most thoroughly be gauged by a ballot of all affected licence holders. There is precedent in that the original trap limits were set following a ballot of licence holders in 1994.

The most recent advice from a majority of caucus was that a ballot of all licence holders would not be undertaken by industry to confirm licence holder support for this proposal. If the caucus and Association would like to revisit the option and proceed with an industry wide ballot, then

the Department is prepared to facilitate this process. However, there is limited time remaining prior to the 2002 commercial fishing season. A ballot procedure could be contemplated for changes considered for the 2003 fishery, which would provide time for industry representatives to communicate and consult on the initiative among their members and with other licence holders generally.

It is important to discuss the implications for the delivery of the fishery in 2002. Please advise on your availability for a conference call discussion in the week of Feb. 11.

Sincerely yours,

J. Morrison, Chair
Prawn Sectoral Committee