

From: [Bill Connor](#)
To: [Haight, Glenn E \(DFG\)](#)
Subject: Clarence sablefish
Date: Friday, June 10, 2016 5:30:11 PM

Glenn,

I am petitioning the state for an emergency regulation.

To be able to change at our option the ability to fish our southern southeast long line sablefish permits eqs with pots.

I believe that we meet both criteria under section 5 AAC 96.625 (f)

First being the threat to the unexpected extra removal of the sablefish biomass in Southern Southeast by killer whale predation.

Second by the unforeseen ability to harvest our eqs by whale predation because of season structure.

My name is Bill Connor, I am a permit holder and active participant in the c61c southern southeast sable fish fishery.

Since 2009 I have had encounters with killer whale predation on my sablefish catch. Since then it has become a serious problem causing the inability to harvest our eqs in a reasonable amount of time and with reasonable expenses, fuel, bait, groceries, and gear cost.

In February of 2015 I submitted proposal 134 at the board of fish in Sitka testifying to the issues of whale predation, excess bycatch, and halibut mortality. Some of the issues the npfmc and halibut commission, state are a problem gulf wide.

So far this year the Department of fish and game has experienced degradation of the Clarence sablefish survey, and this is not the first year it has occurred to the survey. Second as the commercial fishery has opened on June 1 of this year there are several vessels being predated on by killer whales greatly increasing our biomass removal and expenses to harvest our eqs, with some vessels dropping out because of these cost.

These vessels because of the regulation not allowing us to use pot gear will leave unharvested fish, creating economic harm to our crews their family's and the permit holder and vessel, and that's not speaking to the lost tax revenue our state so desperately needs.

There are other vessels that will remain to harvest their eqs, which will cause more biomass removal than anticipated causing harm to the biomass stock.

What is happening is not a natural occurrence for the killer whale, but left unchecked we will continue to teach the whale to strip long lines. By not allowing us to switch to pots this will exasperate this problem and possibly teach the killer whale that halibut is also easy to remove, and southeast Alaska has a very big fleet of small boat halibut fishermen that will soon be a target.

At the board of fish 2015 there was support for proposal 134 by 3 entities and opposed by 1

entity.

I listened to the legal audio and am not sure Lance Nelson understood the Clarence fishery. The comment was , there are already 3 permit holders in the southern southeast sablefish pot fishery 20 AAC 05.320 (e). The board likely does not have authority to allow additional users into this limited entry fishery without prior action by cfec.

The Southern southeast sablefish fishery has 3 pot permits and 17 long line permits it is an equal quota share fishery with each of the total of these permits getting the same poundage amount determined by the department of fish and game from the same biomass. Essentially it is the same fishery just prosecuted with different gear at different times but all in the same area.

Long line gear June 1 to August 15 (75 days) and pot gear September 1 to November 15 (75 days).

At the 2015 board of fish John Johasen the holder of the 3 pot permits also made proposal 131-132-133. He understands what will happen to the biomass if we continue the status quo, he will also lose. We all will lose.

So if the only pot permit holder is in support of allowing long line permits to use pot gear what is the issue?

If nothing else allow the long line permit the opportunity to fish when the 3 pot permits have finished their catch. John has said he is typically done by September 20th. That leaves about 55 days the season is still open by regulation.

In closing because I have to leave to try and catch my eqs, I submit this emergency petition. Also Bruce Twomley called when I was out and explained cfec is not opposed to proposal 134 and should have a conversation with you. 907-790-6944.

Thank you for your help and time.

Bill Connor