



~California Dungeness Crab Task Force~

<http://www.opc.ca.gov/2009/04/dungeness-crab-task-force/>

Date: February 16, 2016

To: Charlton Bonham, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Craig Shuman, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Cc: California Dungeness Crab Task Force
Senator Mike McGuire, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
Valerie Termini, Ocean Protection Council

From: Dungeness Crab Task Force Executive Committee

Re: Dungeness Crab Task Force Executive Committee guidance memo regarding opening of the Dungeness crab commercial fishery

The California Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) Executive Committee (Executive Committee) met via conference call on February 16, 2016 to discuss the recent [announcement from the California Department of Public Health and Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment \(OEHHA\)](#) that Dungeness crab was safe for public consumption south of 38° 00' N Latitude (near Point Reyes in Marin County). This announcement triggered an automatic opening of the recreational fishery pursuant to the Fish and Game Commission emergency regulation.

In response, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) requested the February 16, 2016 call include the opportunity to discuss with the Executive Committee and the broader commercial industry a number of options that could be considered to open the fishery. Options ranged from opening the commercial fishery in the area south Point Reyes to waiting to open until broader areas of coastline test clean (i.e., open statewide or by management area).

The following guidance has been developed by the Executive Committee to help inform CDFW's process for opening the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

The commercial California Dungeness crab industry is committed to ensuring Dungeness crab is safe for public consumption. The Executive Committee requests the Director of CDFW continue to consider the Executive Committee's guidance provided over the past three months and wait to open the commercial Dungeness crab fishery until one of two scenarios is available:

- 1. The preferred option is to open the commercial fishery statewide.*
- 2. If a statewide opener is not possible, the Executive Committee supports opening the fishery using traditional management lines (i.e. the Sonoma-Mendocino County Line) as an alternative.*

The Executive Committee opposes drawing a line at Point Reyes or any other lines outside the Sonoma-Mendocino County Line to open the commercial fishery.

The Executive Committee would like to share the following rationale to support this guidance:

- Opening smaller areas (i.e., creating new lines like Point Reyes) will concentrate fishing effort, creating resource and fishing safety issues;*



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- *Opening a larger area (i.e., statewide or by management area) of the coast to commercial fishing will increase consumer confidence in and reduce confusion around the California Dungeness crab product; and*
- *Opening the commercial fishery south of Point Reyes conflicts with traditional and historic management of the commercial crab fishery as it relates to effort shift and 30 day protection clauses; it would also place a disproportionate burden on those ports closest to the Pt. Reyes line.*

The Executive Committee understands this is a complex issue, and recognizes the urgency for fishermen (including themselves) to begin fishing and support their livelihoods as soon as possible. However, the Executive Committee believes waiting for a statewide or management area opener is in the best interest of the industry long-term. The Executive Committee respectfully requests Director Bonham consider the statements above, and remains committed to working with CDFW and the public health agencies to ensure a safe product is available for public consumption.

The Executive Committee is a subcommittee of the [DCTF](#) composed of a crab processor and commercial fishermen from Morro Bay, Half Moon Bay, San Francisco, Fort Bragg, Eureka, and Crescent City. There are no recreational or commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) representatives on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee cannot make decisions on behalf of the full DCTF. However, due to the sensitive timing of this topic, on October 26, 2015 the Executive Committee was directed to provide guidance to the agencies on this topic. For more information about the Executive Committee and the DCTF please visit the DCTF webpage: <http://www.opc.ca.gov/2009/04/dungeness-crab-task-force/>. Please direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the DCTF Administrative Team at info@dungenesscrabtaskforce.com or (805) 845-9852.