



February 11, 2016

Presentation for Mr. Benjamin Platt, Salmon Fisherman

Dear Chairman McGuire and fellow members of the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture

My name is Ben Platt, I am a salmon and crab fisherman from Sonoma County. I have been a member of the California Salmon Council since 2014.

The California Salmon Council has been the sole advocate for marketing California king salmon since it was first enacted in 1989 by the California Legislature; and after a successful referendum it became operational in 1990. It's worth noting that Zeke Grader wrote the enabling legislation.

The nine California Salmon Council Board of Directors represent both salmon fishermen, salmon handler/processors and a public member. The Council is an advisory state agency to the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA), with equal oversight by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. A CDFA representative attends all meetings to assure we comply with the State open meeting laws. The Council collects assessments on all salmon landed in California. The funds are used to promote our local wild ocean caught fish to consumers and the retail/foodservice trade.

In the past we have conducted radio and television commercials. In the last 10 years as the landings have decreased we've had to curtail our advertising campaign to conduct more traditional public relations. We have sponsored restaurant competitions some of which were channeled through the Sacramento Farm to Fork events in 2015 and 2014. We continue to exhibit at the Boston Seafood Show to inform the US seafood trade that our salmon is the finest in the world. We also rejoined the Buy California Marketing Agreement which is more widely known as "CA GROWN." Listed on my handout are additional promotional activities the Council has underwritten.

The four year drought and the warm water El Nino have certainly negatively impacted our fishery. Prior to that, the fishery weathered a total closure in 2008 and 2009 and extremely limited harvest in 2010 and 2011. The Council played an fundamental role in helping obtain and disburse disaster assistance in 2007, 2009 and 2010. The Council has been working cooperatively with the National Marine Fisheries Service in conducting a research project employing fishermen to collect tissue samples which are analyzed for their DNA. It is our goal to use the Genetic Stock Identification (GSI) project to identify stocks of fish in real time to avoid stocks of concern and harvest abundant stocks. In fact,

our Executive Director is in Washington DC this week seeking appropriations for a Coast Wide GSI funding project for California, Oregon and Washington. We have been collecting samples since 2006. We would encourage this Committee to support this effort by writing a letter to our Congressional Representatives. A two-page handout on the GSI project is included with my report.

The Council is in the process of coordinating a referendum through the California Department of Food & Agriculture to allow salmon handlers and processors to join fishermen in paying equal assessments to double the Council's budget and expand the marketing and promotional outreach. The deadline for the vote is February 22.

As a salmon fisherman, I also hold a Dungeness crab permit. Because of the recent crab closure there is no Crab Council or similar marketing program to help communicate with the food trade. Our Executive Director David Goldenberg can provide insight at a later time on how such a marketing program can become established. In fact, while he is in Washington, DC he will be discussing the potential for disaster assistance with the California members.

Thank you very much for your attention. I am happy to answer any questions.

Ben Platt
F/V Seastar



Supplemental Information

Dan Platt

California Salmon Council

www.calkingsalmon.org

In 2012, the California Salmon Council Board voted to increase the assessment from 2-cents to 5-cents. The 2-cent assessment had never been changed since its inception in 1990. In response, the Handler Board members made a recommendation to amend the Council Law and allow for equal representation and equal assessments. In 2015 AB 958, amended the Council's law allowing the handlers to join. It also contains a clause that either group -- fishermen or handlers – can withdraw from the Council without necessitating a complete closure of the Council. The goal of the amendment was to double the Council's marketing budget to directly fund marketing efforts to expand its reach and effectiveness.

Below is a recap of some of the recent activities and highlights demonstrating what has been accomplished with the limited funds provided by fishermen to raise awareness about California King Salmon and drive demand:

- Television: 2014 and 2015 appearances by cookbook author and caterer Laura Kenny kick off season, summer grilling and Father's Day celebrations
- Sponsored 12 restaurant competitions as part of the popular 2014 Sacramento Farm to Fork celebration.
- Exhibited at the Boston Seafood Show Exposition in 2014 and 2015 with plans set for March 6-8, 2016
- Sponsored Moana Restaurant Group promotion throughout the Bay Area in 2015: Restaurants included-El Dorado Kitchen-Sonoma, Lark Creek-Walnut Creek, Yankee Pier-Lafayette, One Market-San Francisco
- Secured a 2015 salmon season opening feature in the San Francisco Chronicle
- Participated in the Sunset Magazine Celebration at Menlo Park headquarters – 2015
- Updated the Council's social media profile including our website, initiated a Council Facebook page and established and maintained Twitter accounts
- Rejoined CA Grown- Buy California campaign with Social Media outreach
- Continue to coordinate the Genetic Stock Identification (GSI) research to support new management strategies

- Assisted in coordinating 2006, 2008 and 2009 Federal Salmon Disaster Funds
- Japanese Trade Mission – 2004 obtained state grant
- Conducted food nutrition research proving wild caught California king salmon has 29.4% more Omega-3 fatty acids than reported by USDA Nutrition Handbook
- Bay Area Television Ads 2004
- Radio Public Service Announcements (PSA's) 2000
- Federal State Marketing Improvement Grant (FSMIP) to study marketing impediments - 2002
- Developed and sold logo bags for direct sales to consumers
- Created new marketing brochures, recipes and food photography
- Cooperated on numerous magazine, newspaper, radio and television stories on salmon

Looking ahead, has the full impact from the recent approval by FDA on transgenic salmon played out in the market place? Is it confusing to consumers? Will it cause them to stop purchasing salmon? This and other current food trends need to also be addressed to best protect the interests of the members of the California Salmon Council.

The California Salmon Council is the industry's only "self-help" marketing program. As a State Government Agency, it can act in ways no other non-government organization can. For instance, the California Salmon Council is the only agency which is allowed by law to bargain with Tribal interests to purchase, trade or negotiate allocation fishing rights in consultation with the California Attorney General and the Director of the Department of Fish & Wildlife. Although this option has never been exercised, the Council remains the only salmon entity which has state legal authority to purchase fishing allocation shares with tribal Indians who hold bona fide rights to harvest salmon.

Council's Mission and Goals

The California Salmon Council, in cooperation with industry and government, will actively pursue efforts to develop, maintain and expand domestic and international markets at profitable levels, for California King Salmon and salmon products.

- *Promote, advertise and educate to consumers, food service and retail outlets the positive attributes salmon contributes to public health and nutrition.*
- *Communicate with the media to enhance the image of California King Salmon.*
- *Enable the California salmon fishery to purchase, where there are willing sellers, the allocation rights to harvest salmon.*
- *To continuously seek voluntary methods to improve product quality and provide technical information to the industry, media and end-users.*
- *To effectively communicate the actions of the California Salmon Council with interested individuals and organizations.*

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