

Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
August 10, 2016 Hearing Background

[Senator Mike McGuire](#), Chairman of the [Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture](#) (JCFA), and [Assemblymember Jim Wood](#), Vice-Chair, are hosting an informational hearing [“Progress Reports on the 2015-16 Crab Season and Domoic Acid”](#). The hearing will be held Thursday August 10, 2016 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Room 3191 of the State Capitol building.

The hearing is a follow-up to previous JCFA hearings ([December 3, 2105](#), [February 11, 2016](#), and [April 28, 2016](#)) and will focus on the 2015-16 California crab season closures and subsequent openings emphasizing lessons learned and preparedness for future domoic acid episodes. Panels of experts will provide progress reports on: the results of the season, pending federal disaster declarations, current and predicted ocean conditions, what was learned and implemented from this season, and what needs to be addressed in the future.

According to the [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH) [Domoic Acid Frequently Asked Questions](#), domoic acid is “a naturally occurring toxin that is related to a “bloom” of a particular single-celled plant called Pseudo-nitzschia. The conditions that support the growth of Pseudo-nitzschia are impossible to predict. Crustaceans, fish and shellfish are capable of accumulating elevated levels of domoic acid without apparent ill effects on the animals” but problems may occur when the shellfish are consumed by mammals. Elevated levels of domoic acid in crustaceans, fish and shellfish pose a significant risk to the public if consumed. Domoic acid can be fatal to people if consumed in high doses.

As a result of reports of elevated levels of domoic acid, California public health and resource agencies tested crabs, fish and shellfish and reviewed information. The [crab tests](#) resulted in a [recommendation by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment \(OEHHA\)](#) to the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife \(CDFW\)](#) and the [California Fish and Game Commission \(F&GC\)](#) to delay and close crab fisheries to protect public health. Subsequently, [CDFW](#) along with the [F&GC](#) implemented delays and closures to the commercial and recreational Dungeness and rock crab seasons. The unprecedented delays and [closures extended into mid-May for Dungeness crab](#) and [remain in place in some regions for rock crab](#). [Recreational](#) and [commercial](#) crab seasons opened in several phases. The latest information can be found at [CDFW’s crab web page](#).

Additional information including links to: press releases, the agenda, latest information on crab/domoic acid, articles about the hearing, live stream links, and presenter biographies can be viewed at the [committee web site](#) under the [“hearings”](#) heading. Also see our [compilation of crab information](#) which contains a vast amount of press releases, information and articles about crab.

Please contact [Tom Weseloh](#), Chief Consultant, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture for more information.