February 12, 2024

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources  
Chair, California Ocean Protection Council  
California Natural Resources Agency  
715 P Street, 20th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Eric Sklar, President  
California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

RE: CA Fish and Game Commission Agenda Item 8B: EFP (Commission ID# 2022-03; Sub Sea Sonics Pop-up Gear) major amendment request; and support for Ocean Protection Council Funding

Dear Secretary Crowfoot, President Sklar, Commissioners, and Council members:

We the undersigned California Dungeness crab fishermen are writing in support of approval and funding for our participation in the 2024 Sub Sea Sonics/Guardian Experimental Fishing Permit to commercially fish with pop-up gear attached to strings of up to 10 traps. Testing to date has demonstrated that the gear setup under the EFP is reliable, and this expanded EFP would allow a significant number of additional fishermen to evaluate the gear first-hand under realistic fishing conditions. Given the recent Dungeness crab fishery closures, it is critical for us to have opportunities to continue crab fishing in the spring.

We ask the Commission to approve the amendment request to the Sub Sea Sonics EFP as recommended by CDFW. We request that the Ocean Protection Council dedicate a substantial portion of its remaining whale and sea turtle entanglement funding to provide reimbursements for fishermen that purchase gear as part of the approved EFP, so that we can participate to the fullest extent possible.

This will help ensure fishermen have access to opportunities for a long-term sustainable and profitable fishery, while minimizing entanglement risk and supporting early adopters of new innovative technologies in California’s fishing communities.

Sincerely,

Steve Melz, F/V Jacqueline L  
Brand Little, F/V Pale Horse  
Matt Juanes, F/V Plumeria  
Khevin Mellegers, F/V Areona  
Tim Obert, F/V LULU  
Cody Reed, F/V Stacey Jo  
Jim Rando, F/V Misty Dawn

Joseph Parks, F/V Misty Dawn  
Justin Monckton, F/V Ava Mae  
Bob Monckton, F/V Judy Kay  
Gregg Tanji, F/V Sandy B  
Valerie Phillips, F/V Aqua Leo  
Shawn Flading, F/V Kvins  
Bobby Bohannon, F/V Victoria
Mike Phillips, F/V Miss Alison
Michael Cohen, F/V Eagle
Frank Cunningham, F/V Carley Diane

Scott Edson, F/V Genesis
Tommy Walsh, F/V Imperial
Barry Day, F/V Rosella

cc. Jenn Eckerle, California Ocean Protection Council
Mike Esgro, California Ocean Protection Council
Katie Cieri, California Ocean Protection Council
Chuck Bonham, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Craig Shuman, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Eric Kord, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Melissa Miller-Henson, California Fish and Game Commission
Susan Ashcraft, California Fish and Game Commission