



April 11, 2018

The Honorable Robert M. Hertzberg

Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

State Capitol, Room 5046

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1017 Sets bad state policy and should be OPPOSED**

Dear Senator Hertzberg and Committee members,

The San Diego Fishermen's Working Group ("SDFWG") is a 501-c-3 non-profit dedicated to representing the commercial fishing men and women of the greater San Diego region, and educating the public about commercial fishing issues. The SDFWG's Board of Directors is comprised of representatives of all the major fisheries in this area.

San Diego Drift Gillnet fishermen have long provided fresh swordfish to restaurants and other markets. Our swordfish is a prized and valued, sustainable seafood product, and one of the region's top menu selections. This fishery also supports commercial fishing infrastructure generally and without these

swordfish landings, that infrastructure is weakened. This is why ALL San Diego commercial fishing gear types oppose SB1017, and opposition is not limited to direct participants.

The SDFWG is opposed to SB1017 as bad state policy and as causing needless economic harm. There are big problems with this Bill's "findings", which are not factual, in many respects, including how the Drift Gillnet (DGN) fishery is regulated on the west coast. This fishery's effects on other sea life (bycatch, etc) are grossly exaggerated. The truth is, there has not been a single sea turtle mortality in the DGN fishery since 1999. There have been a handful of whale interactions; however, they are well beneath the federal, science-based thresholds, and most whale populations (and other marine mammals) are growing and thriving. Through much hard work from fishermen and regulators, various gear modifications have made this a sustainable and environmentally conscious fishery.

The DGN fishery either releases alive or sells to market 94% of its catch. It will be bad policy for the state to adopt measures that will harm this fishery and the working men and women who participate in it and their families, based on false and/or misleading information.

Well-documented in scientific journals is how well-meaning local environmental protections can lead to a net increase in environmental harm if the fishing activity moves away from strong (US) management. Why would the state legislature promote a policy that will enable foreign fleets to kill thousands of sea turtles when California DGN fishermen, providing fresh swordfish to our residents, kill none?

Please also be aware the DGN fishery is a federally managed fishery and after extensive study, the DGN fishery has transitioned to a federal permitting system in April 2018. It is a well-managed, sustainable federal limited-entry fishery that was recently reclassified as a Category

II fishery in the final 2018 List of Fisheries, meaning there are lower levels of unwanted interactions with non-target species than previously thought. SB1017, therefore, in addition to being full of bad policies, is in conflict with federal management.

The San Diego Fishermen's Working Group OPPOSES SB1017 for the reasons stated above.

Peter Halmay

President

San Diego Fishermen's Working Group