



Fisheries
and Oceans

Pêches
et Océans

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Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

JAN 19 2007

Mr. Geoffrey Gould
Executive Director
Area "A" Crab Association
P.O. Box 21022
Prince Rupert, BC
V8J 4P2

Dear Mr. Gould:

AREA "A" SOFT-SHELL CHARTERS

Thank you for your letter of November 15, 2006 on the soft-shell sampling program in Hecate Strait.

As you know, DFO has been reviewing co-management activities in various fisheries in light of recent court decisions, particularly the Federal Court of Appeal decision in *Larocque v. Canada (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans)*. The Area A soft-shell sampling program has been reviewed, and the Department has determined that it can no longer continue to provide an allocation of crab to support the costs of delivering the soft shell monitoring program.

The fixed soft-shell period established for Area A are the minimum that the Department requires to avoid fishing soft-shell crab. The Department is very interested in assisting the Association to continue to undertake the sampling program and refine the closure dates. Where ways can be found to undertake the program without the need to retain crabs to support the costs of delivering the program, the Department will continue to licence this data collection activity. Please note that the Department does not anticipate being able to fund the 2007 soft-shell sampling program from its own budget.

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Canada

I want to highlight that the Department is working with participants in many Pacific fisheries to co-manage the delivery of programs of interest to the Department and industry. Many fishing fleets in the Pacific Region and across the country have established co-management programs of significant utility to fishers.

The Area "A" Crab Association is well organized and progressive, making it an excellent candidate to work with the Department on co-management initiatives. We would like Area A fishers to consider developing a Joint Project Agreement with the Department to undertake programs of mutual interest, including soft shell monitoring.

I look forward to continuing the cooperation and collaboration between the Department and the Area "A" Crab Association.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Sprout", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Sprout
Regional Director General
Pacific Region

cc: Mr. Michael Jackson