



JUL 17 2012

His Worship Mayor Mike Frazier
Resolution Committee Chair
North Central Local Government Association
206-155 George Street
Prince George, British Columbia
V2L 1P8

Dear Mayor Frazier:

Thank you for your correspondence of July 28, 2011, in which you forward the North Central Local Government Association's resolution pertaining to the recreational sector's allocation of Pacific halibut. I sincerely regret the delay in responding.

I appreciate your concerns and assure you that the Government of Canada understands the importance of the Pacific halibut fishery.

For the halibut fishery in British Columbia, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) allocates access among the recreational, commercial and First Nations sectors through an integrated fisheries planning process that involves all fishing sectors. Allocation decisions incorporate legal requirements, treaty agreements and Aboriginal rights, as well as the equitable use of the resource. In all cases, DFO's first priority is to manage fisheries in a manner that ensures the conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks, while creating economic and social benefits for Canadians.

The Canadian halibut Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is determined on an annual basis through the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), which was established in 1923 by a Convention between Canada and the United States. Canada remains committed to meeting its obligations to the IPHC, and to providing long-term sustainability of the halibut fishery for the benefit of all Canadians. Declining abundance has resulted in fewer halibut for all sectors to harvest. Canada's TAC for 2012 is 7.038 million pounds, down from a high in 2006, when the TAC was 13.2 million pounds.

As you are likely aware, Mr. Randy Kamp, my Parliamentary Secretary, recently completed a review process with First Nations, stakeholders and DFO officials to develop options for the future management of the fishery. Based on the results of the review, I determined that a correction to the allocation formula was required.

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Following First Nations food, social and ceremonial (FSC) requirements, 85 percent of the resource will be allocated to the commercial sector, and 15 percent of the resource will be allocated to the recreational sector.

This correction to the allocation formula will not impact First Nations FSC opportunities for halibut. The commercial and recreational allocation formula adjustment will be made after these First Nation fisheries FSC opportunities have been addressed. DFO will continue to work with First Nations to ensure priority access for FSC purposes, and will also engage First Nations in pursuing opportunities for communal commercial access to halibut through existing programs.

The 2012 Pacific halibut recreational fishing season opened March 1, 2012. Recreational anglers with a tidal water licence are permitted to catch one halibut per day, with two in possession, of which, effective April 1, 2012, only one may be greater than 83 cm. The Department will monitor catches in-season to ensure that the recreational sector remains within its allocation and that Canada respects its treaty obligations. In addition, DFO will continue to work with recreational community representatives to improve monitoring, and identify management measures that will provide the greatest flexibility and season length, while staying within their allocation.

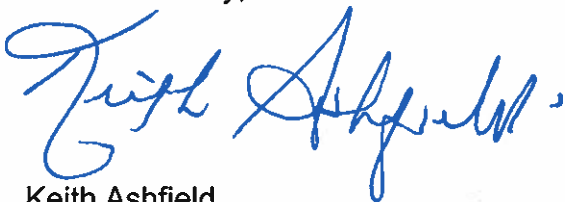
The experimental licence introduced last year, which allows recreational harvesters to lease Pacific halibut quota from commercial harvesters based on market value, will continue to be available. This experimental licence allows participating recreational harvesters to retain more than the standard recreational daily and possession limits described above. It also permits the participants to continue to fish if the regular recreational fishery is closed.

Improvements to the program will be made to reflect the feedback received from participants of the 2011 fishery. The Department will move forward with regulatory changes to continue this market-based transfer mechanism for the long-term.

Should you have additional questions, I encourage you to contact Mr. Neil Davis, Acting Regional Manager, Groundfish Management Unit, by telephone at 604-666-8437, or by email at < neil.davis@dfo-mpo.gc.ca >.

Thank you for sharing your views about this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Ashfield