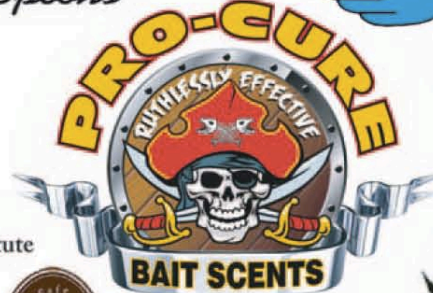


Little Fish mean BIG Business!

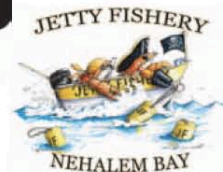
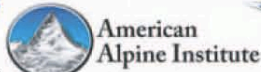
Over 175 West Coast businesses, providing jobs in fishing, food, recreation, tourism and marine-based industries, call for conservation of forage fish.



FISH WITH CONFIDENCE



blueacre seafood



Dear Chairman Wolford and Council Members,

On behalf of businesses that depend on a healthy and productive Pacific Ocean, we ask the Council to establish meaningful protections for forage fish that form the foundation of a vibrant marine food web, allowing our businesses to thrive on the support of a healthy ocean.

We encourage you to move ahead with the first concrete “ecosystem initiative” under your new Fishery Ecosystem Plan -- to protect those forage fish that under the *status quo* are vulnerable to unregulated fisheries. Enacting this initiative will fulfill the intent of the Council to prohibit new fisheries targeting forage fish until the science is in place to determine the effect on existing fisheries and coastal communities. As the global demand for forage fish rises, this is the time to enact a precautionary policy that will give business owners peace of mind that a critical component of the natural resource that we rely upon is protected.

Fishmeal and fish oil prices have risen substantially in the past year, raising the incentive for new large-scale fisheries targeting West Coast species of forage fish such as sand lance, saury and certain kinds of smelts. Whether we sell seafood, lead whale-watching excursions, chase after sport fish or repair diesel engines, our businesses need those forage fish in the ocean fulfilling their ecological role, not being scooped up in a net and sold abroad. Indeed, many of these and other unmanaged forage species we have here on the West Coast already are fished at industrial levels in other parts of the world. As a steward of our coastal ecosystem, and the businesses and communities that depend on it, the Council’s first priority should be to maintain a productive marine food web here on the Pacific coast.

A productive ecosystem is both a cultural resource for coastal communities as well as an economic engine that generates billions of dollars each year through sustainable fisheries, the consumption of fresh local seafood, whale-watching, birding, recreational fishing and other marine based activities. In California alone, a productive marine food web helps to generate \$43 billion annually in ocean-dependent revenue, according to a study cited in 2006 by the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health. Thousands of West Coast citizens have written over the past two years urging the Council to conserve forage fish as the cornerstone of this vital economic and cultural resource.

We are encouraged that the Council has reached consensus over the need to protect these ecologically and economically critical species. We look forward to the Council taking positive action that gives us the security of knowing we can rely on a healthy ocean to provide an economic engine for years to come.

Sincerely,

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Santa Ana, CA

Randy Wood
Owner
Blue Water Bait Systems
Costa Mesa, CA

Ken Lindsay
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Fishermen's Spot
Van Nuys, CA

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