

November 9, 2011

Jim Kellogg, President

California Fish & Game Commission

P. O. Box 944209

Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

RE: Fish Stocking Regulations

Dear President Kellogg and Commissioners,

Before retiring recently, I was the owner and operator of a large catfish farm in Niland, CA for over 40 years. When I began fish farming in 1969, DFG regulations were archaic and extremely burdensome. However, by working with DFG over the next 40 years many of those regulations were deleted or modified to the point that concerns of the aquaculture industry and DFG were largely address in a way that addressed environmental concerns and still provided for a growing aquaculture industry in California.

Regulations now being proposed will reverse years of progress. These proposed regulations threaten the very existence of many aquaculture operations and recreational fishing operations in the state. In many cases they will prove to be prohibitively expensive, leading to some aquaculture operations closing their business and to the loss of fishing opportunities. Worse yet, it is doubtful that these draconian regulations will provide any real increase in the protection of California's wildlife. These proposed regulations, if adopted, will mean a reduction in the production of fish in California for human consumption, the loss of fishing opportunities, and in all probability in a reduction of fishing licenses sold by DFG. California already has a reasonable and workable system in place, leave it alone.

I am appalled that the DFG, the lead agency for promoting the aquaculture industry, has chosen to oversee the decline of aquaculture and recreational fishing in California instead. DFG is failing to seek a reasonable balance between its lead agency responsibility and the needs of wildlife. Perhaps it is time to turn lead agency responsibilities for aquaculture over to the California Department of Agriculture.

I hope you and other members of the Fish and Game Commission will be more forward thinking than those who proposed these regulations.

Sincerely,



George Ray, 57925 Bighorn Drive, Mountain Center, CA 92561

cc. The Honorable Governor Edmund Jr. Brown

The California Aquaculture Association