

Testimony of Nick Edwards in support of House Bill 4049

February 4, House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Chair Witt and members of the committee, my name is Nick Edwards. I am from Coos Bay Oregon. I am here to make public comment in support of House Bill 4049. I am a commissioner for the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission and have been a commercial fisherman for 35 years. My vessel the F/V Carter Jon holds three limited entry permits for: Dungeness crab, pink shrimp and troll salmon.

I wanted to point out to this committee that the Oregon Dungeness crab fishery is the largest single species fishery in Oregon, with average landings worth 48.6 million dollars. Using a safe economic multiplier of times two from the Oregon Department of Agriculture, that's 97 million dollars flowing through Oregon ports and coastal communities. With that said, the Dungeness crab fishery has its challenges and eventual change.

While reviewing Senate Bill 198 during the 2013 legislative session, I discovered a "huge inequity" in the way Dungeness Crab Vessel permits (ORS 580.926) can be revoked in comparison to the other state managed fisheries (The Columbia River Gill Net ORS 508.775; Pink Shrimp; ORS 508.880; Salmon Troll; ORS 508.801).

My Dungeness Crab Vessel permit could be revoked for the action of an "individual" on the boat, whereas, under current law, the vessel permit in these other fisheries can't be revoked for the actions of an "individual" on that boat.

The loss of my vessel permit would result in my entire business being shut down for a whole crab season. This would be a huge economic loss of income for me, my employees, to the port and the State of Oregon, who were not involved in the original violation. HB 4049 addresses this and insures protection of the "vessel permit" and directs accountability to the "individual person".

The Oregon Dungeness Crab fishery has currently 423 permits. A major percentage of these permit holders do not go to sea, they hire captains to run their vessels during the season. Currently the owner of an Oregon Dungeness crab permit has a "large exposure" to losing its vessel permit. This, I believe this was an "unforeseen consequence" when the law was put in statute. House bill 4049 puts stability back to the "permit holder" and places responsibility to the "individual". This is a good bill for Oregon and its fishery.

In closing, many vessel owners compete in one, two, or three fisheries in Oregon. My personal business plan has six employees that depend on an active Oregon Dungeness crab permit. I also hire captains to run my business both in shrimp and crab. I hope they will never put my business or permits at risk. So, obviously I do not condone violations on my boat in any manner. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to express the importance of passing HB 4049