

State-supervised Crab Price Negotiations...

The stage is set for the annual 'state supervised crab price negotiations' (#10) but unlike the past nine years, the ODCC is not going to 'flog' the marketing associations to make sure that the participation thresholds are met and the appointed representatives show up at the bargaining table. If the fleet wants to continue with this process, you're going to have to make it happen...

ODA is prepared to conduct the face-to-face meetings with the processor group on **November 15th and 16th in Newport**, provided they are contacted no later than November 13th by crab marketing association representatives requesting that the Director convene a meeting of "*duly elected or appointed representatives*" of the two parties to "*enter into price negotiations with the objective of reaching agreement on a negotiated season starting price for review and approval by the Department.*"

Jerry Gardner is the contact to signal your ports desire to proceed with the negotiations, and he can be reached at (503) 872-6600 or jgardner@oda.state.or.us. We've scheduled the annual 'Crab Market Report' by John Sackton for November 13th (time and location to-be-determined), and ODA representatives will be at that meeting. Your association can use that opportunity to weigh in as well... FYI, Dalton Hobbs has retired and will not be part of the ODA 'team' this year, but Gary Roth is ready to continue in his supervisory role as ODA's lead in the process.

In the meantime, ODA will be holding an administrative rule hearing on Oct. 22nd in Newport (info below) to get input on the proposed change in the 'participation thresholds' needed to meet the minimum standard for the price negotiations to occur. The original rule, which set the bar at "*75% of harvesters with active permits*" and "*75% of dealers by volume of pounds landed in the previous year*" was lowered last year in a 'temporary rule' process to 61% for both sides of the bargaining unit when it became evident that meeting the 75% minimum would be difficult to achieve for marketing associations *and* the processors.

If it passes, the participation threshold will be lowered to 51% for all seafood sectors in Oregon that choose to use this tool as a means of identifying an 'opening price', and much of pre-negotiation uncertainty will be removed. If it doesn't, it's back up to 75% which will be difficult, if not impossible to meet...

Bottom line? It's your call. If you think the face-to-face negotiation method is the best way to establish an 'opening price' and get the fishery started in a safe and orderly fashion, now's the time to support your marketing association and get involved. If not, ODA and the ODCC are prepared to step back and put the SSPN process on the shelf until such time that the industry decides to dust it off and utilize it once again. As always, feel free to call if you have any questions.

* *The rulemaking hearing will be held on October 22nd at 10:30 a.m. at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport. Kris Anderson/ODA will be the hearings officer.*