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AMERICAN ALBACORE FISHING ASSOCIATION

WCPFC7-2010-IP/02

Letter Submitted by the American Albacore Fishing Association



AMERICAN ALBACORE FISHING ASSOCIATION

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VIA EMAIL TO: wcpfc@wcpfc.int

WCPFC/Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
P.O. Box 2356 Kolonia
Pohnpei 96941
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories:

On behalf of the American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA), I would like to express our appreciation to the Commission for its efforts toward conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks. We believe that effective management depends upon international cooperation.

AAFA represents a significant portion of the United States commercial albacore troll and pole & line fishery. Our association was founded by and for fishermen seeking to ensure sustainable tuna fisheries using the best available science. The tradition of this and other tuna fisheries across the Pacific depend on effective management.

Our fishermen are strongly motivated to promote responsible management and the sustainable use of tuna stocks. AAFA has led the way in implementing market-based incentive programs and rigorous traceability measures.

One doesn't have to look far to see the impetus for successful management. Despite this encouragement, the Commission's consensus requirement often allows short-term political and economic interests to impede progress.

AAFA seeks to contribute its support to the WCPFC and its Northern Committee, and cooperate in accelerating adoption of measures to eliminate illegal, unreported, and

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unregulated (IUU) fishing. The continued existence of IUU fishing reduces the accuracy of fishery data and undermines the efficacy of corresponding fishery science.

We support the development and implementation of rigorous traceability requirements to ensure compliance with WCPFC conservation measures. AAFA has designed and put into practice a traceability procedure that allows tuna products to be traced from vessel capture to consumer plate. The AAFA program records the vessel, captain, flag, fishing gear, catch species, date of offload, weight, and party taking ownership.

We extend our support to the WCPFC in implementing similarly strict measures to better detect IUU fishing in order that it may be addressed and eliminated.

AAFA welcomes the opportunity to assist WCPFC scientific bodies in obtaining accurate and complete data on fisheries and fish stocks and encourages other fishing organizations and industry members to contribute appropriate data in a timely manner.

AAFA encourages the United States to continue providing leadership, scientific advice, and financial support within the WCPFC to accomplish the work necessary to protect and manage these important tuna stocks.

We respectfully ask the Commission to forward our message to the Northern Committee for their consideration as they undertake discussions regarding North Pacific albacore.

Sincerely,

Jack Webster, President
American Albacore Fishing Association