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EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION**  
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**CLOSING STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN  
FISHERMENS RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

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**WCPFC8- 2011-OP-19  
30 March 2012**

**CLOSING STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN FISHERMENS RESEARCH FOUNDATION**  
**ON MARCH 30, 2012 AT THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WESTERN AND**  
**CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION IN GUAM**

First, the American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF) and its supporting organization of albacore troll fishermen and their marine suppliers, the Western Fishboat Owners Association (WFOA), would like to thank the Secretariat of the WCPFC and the members of the WCPFC for permitting AFRF to participate in this meeting as an Observer. Secondly, AFRF would like to thank all of Guam, but in particular, the Guam Fishermen's Association, for their hospitality and assistance.

The primary area of concern for AFRF (and WFOA) at this meeting was a proposed amendment to the CMM 2010-05 submitted by the Forum Fisheries Agency. Unfortunately, the press of other business did not enable the Commission to discuss this request until the afternoon of the last day of the annual meeting. This prevented the Commission members from having a full discussion of this item, which AFRF would have welcomed. There was no consensus reached on the FFA proposal. Since the FFA declared that it would be bringing to the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting of the Commission (and one assumes the TCC-8 and the SC-8) a CMM which would seek to limit effort and catch on South Pacific albacore across all gear types, AFRF looks forward to working with members of the WCPFC and participating Observers to reach a reasonable conclusion.

Unlike this meeting, AFRF hopes to be consulted early in the process of crafting a new CMM by the interested members of the WCPFC. As many of you know, AFRF is a non-profit foundation which is devoted to scientific research and public education for North and South Pacific albacore troll and pole and line fisheries. It is also an advocate for the sustainable use of this resource and its conservation and management based on the best available science. AFRF is a qualified Observer to both the WCPFC and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and attends all their meetings, as well as meetings of the Northern Committee of

the WCPFC. In addition, AFRF and WFOA have been deeply involved with the WCPFC since the early days of the MHLC process in the 1990s, through the meetings of the Preparatory Commission, until the present day of the MHLC. This has been a costly and resource consuming effort over the years.

Generally, AFRF and WFOA have been unable to also attend meetings of the TCC and the SC. For this reason AFRF, and WFOA, hope that they may be electronically connected with any meetings of the members and observers who work on the pending CMM, whether at the TCC, SC, or in the interim. On the off-hand chance that such participation is denied, AFRF would like to state a few principles for the record.

First, AFRF believes CMMS should only be based on the best scientific information available. At this time that information indicates:

1. South Pacific albacore is not overfished nor is overfishing occurring.
2. The stocks of South Pacific albacore are above MSY.
3. The troll and pole and line fishery for South Pacific albacore is having no discernible effect on the stocks.
4. The troll and pole and line fishery has shown no appreciable expansion since 2005.
5. When 2005-03 was accepted by the Commission there was no scientific basis to limit the troll and pole and line South Pacific albacore fishery.

Secondly, AFRF and WFOA, both believe it is important for the SPC to at least perform tri-annual assessments on the stock, if not more frequently. Thirdly, these organizations believe the establishment of target and limit reference points is an extremely important goal. Finally, both organizations believe additional life history and other research should be done on an urgent basis.