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Lachlan Smith
Fisheries Policy Analyst
Victorian Fisheries Authority
1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Via: lachlan.smith@vfa.vic.gov.au

Dear Lachlan

RE: Victorian Octopus Fishery Further Quota Order

Thank you for the documentation and rationale for the Victorian Octopus Fishery Further Quota Order received on the 15th June 2020. As part of our consultation process towards making this submission we have been in contact with fishers who we are aware have qualified.

The key items for your consideration are:

- There has not been sufficient information provided to licence holders around their proposed quota holdings to make a measured submission.
- The biomass is thought to be in the thousands of tonnes, and the setting of 68.7t, while conservative, could be too conservative for the first 12 months of the fishery operation with 11 licences.
- The catch this past 6 months has been significantly affected through seismic operations, alongside bushfires and the pandemic.
- Octopus, as is presented in the VFA supporting documentation, has a very similar life history to Squid, where they are believed to have approximately a 12 months life cycle and certain traits that need to be fully understood in appropriately managing the resource.
- The level of TACC and the assessment of the 68.7t of catch equating to \$1 million landed value is not supported as presented.
 - When assessing the ABARES figures, the beach price is approximated \$4/kg, with Victorian catch reported at 41 tonnes of catch with and a landed value of \$139,000¹.

¹ <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/fisheries/fisheries-data#australian-fisheries-and-aquaculture-statistics-2018>

- Therefore, even if we used \$7/kg which is roughly where fishers are paid today, with freight and handling taken out of the price, then the fishery has the opportunity to be valued at \$480,900.
- To create a \$1 million fishery would require a beach price of approximately \$15/kg – more than double the current beach price – or a higher TACC.

However, we (SIV and the industry) want to work with the VFA to make this fishery as successful as possible, and welcome the news that 11 members have qualified to be included in the fishery. To deliver this effectively and efficiently, with a sense of true collaboration – we seek that the Further Quota Order not be signed at this point in time.

We seek the VFA's commitment to arrange meetings in Lakes Entrance, of which SIV will make ourselves available, to present to licence holders individually the insight as to what applying the Independent Allocation Panels findings means to their interest in the fishery. From what we have been informed by successful candidates, this has not occurred to date and therefore future licence holders are unable to properly consider this and make adequate submissions to this process.

It will be through this consultation process that the VFA, SIV and industry can truly appreciate what the viability of a single operation would look like to properly advise the Further Quota Order in establishing the TACC and allocation formula.

It would also be advised that these discussions include a presentation of Cost Recovery contributions and mechanisms to appropriately manage the fishery. There is draft Cost Recovery schedule on the VFA's website², however how this fits with the licence:quota split is uncertain, and this is based on 10 licences, when 11 have qualified.

We seek this collaboration and thorough consultation process be implemented as soon as possible so we can progress these deliberations, and I am happy to discuss any of this content and its delivery with you.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission, and also thank those licence holders who contacted SIV to provide their insight for our submission.

Yours sincerely



Johnathon Davey
Executive Director

² https://vfa.vic.gov.au/data/assets/excel_doc/0007/562975/2020-21-OCTOPUS-schedule-.xlsx