



Backgrounder: Sample Letter & Testimony

A sample letter and testimony are provided below. Most of these elements are optional, but you can use these ideas to design your letters and testimony to the Council. This letter is more complicated than most in order to show how a letter-writer might handle various situations. More simple letters, without references or attachments, are just as effective. The topic is hypothetical to avoid any resemblance to actual management issues.

Sample letter

Be sure to send the letter more than two weeks before the next Council meeting so it can be included in the briefing book. If possible, type the letter and print it out on letterhead.

Address the letter to the right person (usually the Chair or Executive Director)

If you represent an organization, say how many members it has

Refer to the fishery management plan or rule you are commenting on

State your desire clearly. Make sure that what you are requesting falls within the Council's mandate.

Give some background about your experience and expertise.

Include references if relevant.

May 7, 2007

Dr. Donald McIsaac
Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220

Dear Dr. McIsaac:

I am writing on behalf of the Bay Area Giant Squid Supporters (BAGSS), a nonprofit organization with 8000 members, to express our concern that giant squid are not included in the Pacific Fishery Management Council's proposed Sea Creature Fishery Management Plan (SCFMP).

We urge the Council to include giant squid in the SCFMP.

My father was a giant squid fisherman, and from an early age I helped him on his boat. Later, as a founder of BAGSS, I made the study of giant squid my life's work. In 2001 I worked on an assessment of giant squid in northern California for the National Giant Squid Association (Lattimer and Gelleau 2001).

Explain why this is important to you. If possible, connect the issue to other issues facing the Council.

Provide supplemental information if it is relevant, but keep it brief.

If you have been involved in this issue, give some background.

If possible, show that you understand other factors that are influencing the issue.

If possible, connect your concern to the National Standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (see the Magnuson Act fact sheet for a list of the National Standards).

Re-state your argument at the end.

Suggest a constructive step for the Council to take.

Volunteer your services, if possible and relevant.

Close respectfully. Provide a way for the Council to get more information if they wish.

Sign your name and give your address.

Don't forget the attachment.

The assessment clearly showed that these mysterious and beautiful creatures play an important role in California's coastal ecosystem, particularly in regard to their symbiotic relationship with Pacific Ocean perch.

A brief summary of the assessment's findings is attached.

In May 2005, I sent a letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service on behalf of BAGSS expressing our concern that NMFS was ignoring giant squid.

The letter echoed many of the concerns presented in the lawsuit filed by the Squid Supporters of Hawaii (SQUISH). The decision in the SQUISH lawsuit is scheduled for November 2008 and is likely to bring giant squid to the foreground of fishery management issues.

National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act states that "Conservation and management measures shall be based upon the best scientific information available." We at BAGSS strongly believe that the 2001 assessment of giant squid represents the best scientific information available on these animals, and should be considered in the SCFMP.

In closing, BAGSS respectfully recommends that the Council immediately create a committee to consider including giant squid in the FMP. I would be happy to serve upon such a committee and make my knowledge of giant squid available to the Council.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about this important matter, please contact me at 503-820-2280.

Sincerely,

Julio Lattimer
2243 Ink Avenue
Calamari, CA 89431

Reference:

2001. Lattimer, Julio, and B.A. Gelleau. A Comprehensive Assessment of *Architeuthis dux*. Calamari, CA: National Giant Squid Association.

Attachment: Assessment highlights (2 pp.)

Sample Testimony

Testimony is limited to five minutes for individuals, or ten minutes for group representatives. A yellow light means you are running out of time; a red light means you are out of time and should close your testimony.

This is the greeting traditionally used to address the Council. If the Chair is female, use “Madam Chairwoman” or “Madam Chairperson.”

State your name for the record. If you represent an organization, say how many members it has.

Refer to the fishery management plan or rule that you are commenting on.

State your desire clearly. Make sure that you are asking for something that falls within the Council’s mandate.

Give some background about your expertise and experience.

Don’t be afraid to show a little passion. On the other hand, try to control any excessive anger you might feel.

Connect the issue to other important issues facing the Council.

Provide supplemental information if it is relevant, but keep it brief. Be sure to send it in by the briefing book deadline (available on the website or by calling the Council).

Provide a short history of your involvement with this issue.

Demonstrate knowledge of other factors that are influencing the issue.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Council.

My name is Julio Lattimer. I represent the Bay Area Giant Squid Supporters (BAGSS), a nonprofit organization with 8,000 members.

We would like to express our concern that giant squid are not being considered in the Council’s proposed Sea Creature Fishery Management Plan.

We urge the Council to include consideration of giant squid in the SCFMP.

My father spent his life fishing for giant squid, and from an early age I was impressed by these beautiful animals. As a founder of BAGSS, I have made the study of giant squid my life’s work. In 2001, with Brian Gelleau of Humboldt State University, I conducted a comprehensive assessment of giant squid in northern California for the National Giant Squid Association. The assessment clearly showed that these mysterious creatures play an important role in California’s coastal ecosystem, particularly in regard to their symbiotic relationship with Pacific ocean perch.

Exhibit B.7 in your briefing book gives a brief summary of the assessment.

In May 2005, I sent a letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service on behalf of BAGSS expressing our concern that NMFS was ignoring giant squid. The letter echoed many of the concerns presented in the lawsuit filed by the Squid Supporters of Hawaii (SQUISH). The decision in the SQUISH lawsuit is scheduled for November 2008 and is likely to bring giant squid to the foreground of fisheries management issues.

If possible, connect your concern to the National Standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Re-state your argument at the end (but don't go over your allotted time!)

Suggest a constructive step for the Council to take.

Volunteer your services, if possible and relevant.

National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act states that "(2) Conservation and management measures shall be based upon the best scientific information available." We at BAGSS strongly believe that the 2001 assessment of giant squid represents the best scientific information available on these animals, and should be considered in the SCFMP.

In closing, BAGSS would like to respectfully recommend that the Council immediately create a committee to consider including giant squid in the FMP. I would be happy to serve on such a committee and make my knowledge of giant squid available to the Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.