



Senate Environment and Communications References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Sent by email

Date: 20 November 2015

Subject: Marine Stewardship Council submission to the inquiry into the environmental, social and economic impacts of large-capacity fishing vessels operating in Australia's marine jurisdiction

Dear Ms. McDonald,

Thank you for your invitation to provide a written submission to the inquiry into large capacity fishing vessels to the Environment and Communications References Committee.

The Marine Stewardship Council is a non-profit organisation that maintains a third-party independent standard for sustainable fishing, reflecting the most up to date understanding of internationally accepted fisheries science and best practice management. It is the only certification and ecolabelling program for wild-capture fisheries that is consistent with United Nations best practice guidelines for ecolabelling and certification, and we are a member of the ISEAL Alliance, the global membership association for sustainability standards.

The MSC Fisheries Standard outlines three Principles that fisheries are measured against:

- Principle 1: Sustainable fish stocks. The fishing activity must be at a level which ensure it can continue indefinitely.
- Principle 2: Minimising environmental impact. Fishing operations must be managed to maintain the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem.
- Principle 3: The fishery must comply with relevant laws and have a management system that is responsive to changing circumstances.

Fisheries that are assessed against the Standard undergo a detailed assessment carried out by independent experts, scoring against 28 Performance Indicators. Under Principle 2 there is particular scrutiny on the fishery's impacts on the environment, benthic habitat, bycatch, endangered/threatened/protected species, and overall ecosystem dynamics.

The Standard is applied to all fisheries under assessment whether they are small scale fisheries or fisheries that operate large vessels, all catch capacities, species, gear types, habitats, etc. It is outcome-focused, and does not include or exclude any particular type of fishing (except explosives and poisons fishing) but depending on the type of fishing, some issues may be more significant than others. In order to be certified, fisheries need to be above the minimum acceptable level of sustainability for all indicators, and at the global best practice level of performance for most.



The MSC Standard and assessment process is endorsed by WWF and other NGOs:

[Assessment of On-Pack, Wild-Capture Seafood Sustainability Certification Programmes and Seafood Ecolabels](#) (2010)

[WWF Report: Comparison of Wild-Capture Fisheries Certification Schemes](#) (2012)

Concerning the Committee's inquiry, the MSC Fisheries Standard does not cover item c) on social and economic impacts. As outlined above, the focus is on environmental sustainability.

Currently a number of fisheries operating large capacity vessels (e.g. over approximately 100 meters in length) have been independently certified as sustainable. These include, but may not be limited to:

Fishery name	Date certified	Website link
Aker Biomarine Antarctic krill	June 2010, June 2015	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/southern-ocean/aker-biomarine-antarctic-krill
Alaska Pollock – Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands	February 2005, December 2010	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/bsai-pollock
Alaska Pollock – Gulf of Alaska	April 2005, September 2010	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/gulf-of-alaska-pollock/alaska_pollock_gulf_of_alaska
Australian blue grenadier	August 2015	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/australia-blue-grenadier
New Zealand hoki	March 2001, October 2007, September 2012	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/new-zealand-hoki
Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association Atlanto-Scandian herring pelagic trawl	July 2010	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/in-assessment/north-east-atlantic/spsg-dppo-pfa-sfpo-and-kfo-atlanto-scandian-purse-seine-and-pelagic-trawl-herring
Rimfrost Antarctic krill	August 2015	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/southern-ocean/rimfrost-antarctic-krill
Russian Sea of Okhotsk pollock	September 2013	https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/russia-sea-of-okhotsk-pollock



Detailed assessment reports for all of these fisheries are available on the MSC website fisheries pages, as per links above. These publicly available documents describe the fishery, its operations and vessels, and the scoring of each fishery against MSC Performance Indicators including Principle 2 bycatch, habitats and ecosystem impacts, and the scoring justifications provided by the team of independent experts. Stakeholder comments received during the assessment process, peer reviewer comments, and the expert team's response to all of these are also in these reports.

We offer this as evidence that the Committee may wish to reference with respect to the ability of fisheries operating large vessels to meet the high MSC requirements for environmental performance.

If you have any questions regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me either by email maylynn.nunn@msc.org or phone +61 (0)2 9527 6883.

Best regards,

Maylynn Nunn
Senior Fisheries Assessment Manager, Asia Pacific
Marine Stewardship Council