

SUMMARY

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To summarize this very briefly, as I have listened to the proceedings here today, the basic question is "Do you or do you not want to preserve the wetfish fleet?" If the answer to that question is yes—I think I have heard evidence here that would indicate there is a market and need for this fleet—then I would hope the basic decision could be made, perhaps within this group. Say yes we do want to preserve the wetfish industry, and then let's get on with trying to solve the problems and bring together a management plan. I would like to close this on the theme that it was started out on; and that is, a piecemeal approach—as we are going at it now—is not a real solution. We have ample guidelines both at federal and state level to say that we should try to master plan this thing. Here is a marvelous opportunity for a group such as this, who would be comprised of the various interests in the fishing industry, to get together and solve the problem instead of making excuses as to why we can't solve it—or it's too hard or we've got institutional constraints or this type of thing. What I would recommend is that, if possible, you establish some sort of standing committee or group within this organization to set about the task of developing a planning guideline. This doesn't mean that the people here, necessarily, have to do the work; but they should be able to specify the objectives, identify the problems, and identify the holes, if you will, in areas where we need more data. Then you can develop a master plan for this industry which could serve as a prototype for any future fishing industry in the United States. You would have a chance to answer the questions from a total system aspect; you would be in a position to go to the Bureau of the Budget, sit across the round table

from these people, and say "Yes, we considered that, and here is what our results show." Now, you have a basic trade off, and that is to note we have a very large deficiency as far as data are concerned. Do we wait until we get more data or do we try and go ahead today with what we've got? There is a middle ground there somewhere, but it seems to me we do have quite a bit of data. From a final point of view, this is truly a systems type problem and I doubt if the piecemeal approach is going to produce any conclusive or substantial results. I agree with Dr. Chapman when he says we ought to start all over with the new processing plant; maybe we should even think about the processor owning the fleet of boats. That has a lot of advantages: he could buy them in a group of six or ten, he gets a lower price, he's got a standardized ship, he's got common repair parts, maintenance procedures, etc. All this helps to optimize or make a more efficient operation. This again, of course, assumes that some of these institutional problems can be solved. If we can get a master plan, and if we can prove that this industry is worth developing and pursuing, we can get the help either from the federal or state government to develop it. We can also go to people, such as the present processors, and say "Look, here are the facts, now will you or won't you invest in this industry?" Hopefully our case will be strong enough that they will. I think personally, that in today's economic environment, conglomerates, if they were more interested in developing their own business—internally in their own resources—instead of worrying about picking up some unrelated industry—that they know nothing about, but looks good on the balance sheet—we would all be in a lot better shape.