

14 May 2007

TE OHU
KAIMOANA



MĀORI FISHERIES TRUST

Time to Withdraw Fisheries Amendment Bill

Te Ohu Kaimoana, the Maori Fisheries Trust, said today it was pleased that major fishing companies and quota owners have joined with it to call for a reduction in the Hoki Total Allowable Commercial Catch for the long-term benefit of this important fishery.

“We have discussed the need for careful management of hoki with quota owners and various iwi over the last few weeks and sought a reduction in the TACC. We believe it is in the long-term interests of Maori fishing to reduce the catch now to ensure future gains with this fishery,” Te Ohu Kaimoana chief executive Peter Douglas said.

Te Ohu Kaimoana, as trustee of quota being allocated to Iwi, along with its commercial arm, Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd, as well as Sealord Group Ltd and Sanford Ltd have agreed on the need to reduce the catch. There is a strong scientific view that poor recruitment of young fish in the hoki stocks is related to environmental factors.

Te Ohu Kaimoana recently opposed amendments to the Fisheries Act because we considered that the changes are not necessary to ensure sustainability. Today’s support by the country’s major hoki quota owners for a reduction in the catch demonstrates the Act and the Quota Management System are working well and are responsive to changes in fish stocks.

Two options put forward by the Ministry of Fisheries include keeping the hoki TACC at the current 100,000 tonnes. A third option, which is more conservative and precautionary, is to reduce the Hoki TACC to 80,000 tonnes.

“Maori will always be part of the fishing industry, and therefore we need to take the long-view. We have always said that where science and management indicate that catch limits should be cut, Te Ohu Kaimoana will support a reduction. Our commercial arm, Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, has taken an active role in seeking this precautionary approach as well,” Mr Douglas said.

Mr Douglas urged other industry members to support the cut.