

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Golden Gate Restaurant Association Fights to Keep San Francisco the Dungeness Crab Capital of the U. S.**

### **GGRA Supports State and City Legislation to Help Local Fisherman and Preserve San Francisco's Dungeness Crab Season**

SAN FRANCISCO (March 7, 2005) – The Golden Gate Restaurant Association (GGRA) is actively supporting proposed state and city legislation, to be introduced by California Assemblyman Mark Leno and San Francisco Supervisor and Board President Aaron Peskin, respectively, to protect local fishermen and preserve San Francisco's Dungeness crab season. With help from the GGRA, Leno and Peskin have crafted proposals that work hand-in-hand to stop large commercial fishing boats from crowding out local fisherman and over-harvesting crab early in the season.

Assemblyman Leno has introduced AB749, the Dungeness Crab Bill, which seeks to limit the number of crab traps on any given commercial fishing boat in the San Francisco region to 250. Supervisor Peskin has proposed a city ordinance that would support Leno's 250-trap limit and would prevent any ship with more than 250 traps from loading or unloading crab traps or crabs in the City and County of San Francisco.

In recent years, large commercial fishing boats have flocked to local waters in greater numbers at the start of San Francisco's Dungeness crab season, which begins two weeks earlier than in other regions. The number of crab traps used in the San Francisco Bay Area's limited fishing grounds has skyrocketed by 500 percent. As a result, the Bay Area's crab season has become markedly shorter, hurting local fisherman whose livelihoods depend on Dungeness crab fishing and forcing Bay Area residents and restaurants to purchase either frozen crabs or more expensive crabs from northern waters.

"Dungeness crab is one of the great culinary treasures of the San Francisco Bay Area," noted GGRA Executive Director Kevin Westlye. "The proposed bills work together to help protect local fisherman and will ensure that San Franciscans are able to enjoy fresh local crab throughout the crab season -- including the holidays. Serving Dungeness crab for Thanksgiving has been a local culinary tradition for many generations."

Dungeness crab fishing has been popular in San Francisco since the Gold Rush. However, since the 1970s, large commercial boats, many from Oregon and Washington, increasingly have dominated the industry. These boats, which exceed 50 feet in length and deploy more than 250 crab traps each, descend on Bay Area waters at the opening of the Dungeness crab season, which is two weeks earlier here than it is in either of the other Pacific Coast states. They quickly deplete the Bay Area waters of the season's crabs, leaving little sustainable harvest to see local fisherman through the season, which lasts until June 30 in the San Francisco Bay Area and July 15 in the north.

"The Bay Area's unsurpassed fresh, local seafood and produce have helped propel San Francisco to the top of the list of pre-eminent dining destinations," noted GGRA Director Mariann Costello. "In order to ensure that we remain a culinary capital, we must continue to fight on behalf of all local fishermen and farmers."

Last year, Assemblyman Mark Leno introduced bill AB 2146, the Dungeness Crab Bill, in the California State Assembly. While the bill enjoyed broad-based support, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed it in the final hour. This year, the GGRA hopes to raise community awareness of this critical issue and to support both Leno and Peskin in their quests to pass crab-trap limiting legislation in both the State and City governments.

**About the Golden Gate Restaurant Association:** The GGRA is a collective non-profit trade organization that promotes, extends and protects the interests of the restaurant industry in the San Francisco Bay Area. Founded in 1936, the GGRA is a central source of unbiased information and effective representation covering all aspects of the restaurant industry. Today the GGRA includes more than 700 members and is governed by a Board of Directors elected from the membership at large.

Membership is open to the entire Bay Area food service industry, including restaurants, catering operations, bars and taverns. Associate memberships are available for supplier organizations. The GGRA continues to meet the increasing need for industry unification and representation through a network of communication and activity and welcomes input and assistance from industry members to ensure that the San Francisco Bay Area restaurant industry continues to flourish.

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Media contact: Caroline Coleman or Jeff Nead, Glodow Nead Communications (415)  
394-6500 or  
caroline@glodownead.com