Owen A. Kogan: Hello, my name's Owen A. Kogan. By profession I'm a mechanical engineer. By hobby I'm a sport fisherman, a light tackle fisherman with numerous light tackle records in tournaments they have down here, Key West tournament and the old defunct MET tournament.

I find in the pursuit of any sport a level playing field is good, but a constantly moving goal post is frustrating. Why doesn't the committee, whatever they're doing, just finally put the goal post on large trophy-sized offshore fish in one place and put it there. They can say we can catch these fish, or you can say, fine, the oceans are closed forever and ever, and no one can have anything. But don't keep moving the goal post around.

I've owned five sport fishing boats in my life. I'm thinking about buying another one. I got a half million dollar budget, and I'm thinking of buying an Invincible 42' with four outboard motors. And on top of gas going to $5.00 a gallon by a year from now, that Bernanke wants to do that, if I can't put any fish in the fish box, I'm sorry, but a lot of people will be out of work if I don't buy that.

Now, simply put the goal post somewhere. That's what I have to say about that. Now, as far as the stuff about corals goes, I made an observation from fishing off of Key Largo of a phenomenon that Metro Dade is doing with the federal support called deep well sludge pumping. Are you familiar what that is?

Male: _____

Owen A. Kogan: Water, sludge made of water, we all know it's non-compressible. You pump this sewage sludge, a very toxic one percent of it down there, it's gotta go somewhere. And if you look at your laws of physics, ammonia gas under high pressure stays in solution. It doesn't turn to gas. This is coming up out of rocks on the continental shelf, and it's poisoning deep water growth out there in over 300 feet of water.

So you've all drawn the line at 240 in the South Atlantic. No fishing beyond this line. Like Saddam Hussein drew in the desert, he drew a line for us, too, and dared us to cross it.

And while we may not catch fish out there, this phenomenon is – the stuff doesn't just go away. It's gonna stay there, and it's gonna percolate up through porous lines. It's gonna poison everything out there. And like anything under pressure, this stuff goes down

3,500 feet under 5,000, 6,000 psi, and it's gonna move or migrate. It's gonna take the path of least resistance.

So when they put this stuff down there at high pressure, they have a slow-motion explosion that's gonna leak out through the thinnest rock starting in the deepest water, the most fragile bottom and ammonia – put it this way – we don't like ammonia. If a refrigeration plant leaks, it'll kill us. We can always run away.

Corals can't run away, and it's gonna wipe them out. I've seen signs of algae out there I pulled up in my terminal tackle in the past that seems to be signs of this occurring. I don't know whose jurisdiction it is, but it doesn't work to sweep it under a rug and not to process it.

The other one is I heard about this Amendment 17B, the line they drew in 240 to protect these fish in deep water. First of all, off of Carolina, and Northern Florida and Georgia, that's a pretty long run to get to 240 feet of water. Out here, Miami and the Keys, it's probably on a calm day a 15-minute ride by a jet ski. Would you agree?

Male: It's not far.

Owen A. Kogan: It's not far. First of all, I don't see any way in policing it. If you're gonna pass laws of a wink and a nod, I'll tell you what that does. Are you familiar with the great poach of 2008, Captain Rob Hammer and co-conspirators with 6,000 lobsters during closed season?

Male: Oh, yeah. I remember.

Owen A. Kogan: Well, it fosters bad behavior and it fosters cheating. If they're gonna keep this law, this line they drew in 240, no bottom fishing, and they wanna protect the humps, they wanna protect the cruiser and the destroyer off of Key West, there's a simple way of doing it. I got a name for it. I call it "operation guardian." I got a more colorful name for it as well.

All you have to do to keep illegal gear from being dropped in these deep spots, you take large concrete buoy anchors – the big tetrahedrons out of concrete – drop one down each side of the formation crosswise to the current. Put a stainless steel cable from one to the other, and use small underwater buoys filled with syntactic foam. This stuff can be made dirt cheap. The cable's

available through recycled places. Then if you want, you put X-shaped spurs on it that'll cut lines that get caught on this.

That protects it 24/7. It's like having a policeman on every location. They don't have to pay them, and it's a very definite, in no uncertain terms, no means no. My more colorful term for this is called "operation chastity belt."

You don't need to do it in every area, just the biggest humps and biggest areas. Get the word across; no cheating. Now, if Amendment 17B doesn't pass, you don't put it down. But if you're gonna put it down, if I can't fish it, I don't want someone else out there poaching it. Did that make sense?

One more thing about catch shares: If catch shares are gonna form a privileged class of fishermen i.e., charter boats can have them, recreational boats can't, charter boats are gonna – captains are gonna get drunk and wanna board my boat at the marina, and look in my fish box and question me about what fish I have, especially when they don't have a badge, this is gonna lead to more bad behavior. You see where this goes.

If you wanna have a simple solution about this, they had a – when there's not enough to go around – they had a solution over half century ago. It was in World War II when there wasn't enough gasoline and tires to go around. It's called rationing, the R word, rationing. That's a fair level playing field for everybody.

You don't make a –'cause the moment they make a recreational – charter boats can catch these fish and recreational boats can't – at that point in time, the law's unconstitutional because it's not representation – taxation representation, and I nor no one else will follow that type of a law.

If it's deemed too scarce a resource and needs to be managed, it can be rationed similar way they rationed tires or gasoline in World War II. Been there, they've done that. They've already been to this system. I think it's a useful one to apply.

Ben Hartig: Excuse me. Sir, if you would like to carry on a conversation, please take it outside.

Male: I'm not _____ into my debts.

Ben Hartig: Excuse me.

Male: I've gotta start ____ my debts.

Male: But we can't hear it. No one wants to hear it.

Ben Hartig: Well, if you wanna explain it to your daughter, please take it outside.

Owen A. Kogan: Translate.

Ben Hartig: We can't allow people to have a comment when other people are talking in the background. It's rude, and it doesn't allow us to be able to hear what –

Owen A. Kogan: No problem. I barely heard him anyway. My hearing's shot. I'm just saying make stuff that makes sense. If you're going to do it, and it's really meaningful, and it's not being lobbied by – I don't have the exact scientific term – if it's not being lobbied by a bunch of bunny huggers that don't want us catching, hunting or anything else, and they wanna turn it into a petting zoo, and it's not scientifically based, and these people choose to be vegetarians, that's fine. My remark for PETA is – I got a PETA shirt. It says "People Eating Tasty Animals." That's my reply to people like PETA.

If this is scientific – another thing – has anybody ever done a study for each specific type of seafood how many gallons of fuel does it take to acquire it? 'Cause I know – I heard somewhere gulf shrimp, two gallons of diesel is required to produce a pound of gulf shrimp. What I'm getting at is we got gasoline and diesel, they say within a year is gonna reach $5.00 a gallon. Now I don't know if it's really gonna go there or not, but it's been there once before.

This is not Atlantic. It lets you go up off the northern floor, but you gotta run a long distance, or in the Gulf of Mexico, you gotta run a long distance. If this is the case, a lot of these situations – that guy Pruitt from Madeira Seafood – I forgot his name – Rob Pruitt, whatever his name is – he had a joke years ago that he wanted grouper for his long-line fleet to go to $50.00 a plate at restaurants. We know in this economy no one's gonna buy it at $50.00 a plate. And if the fuel becomes too expensive, these fuel-intensive fisheries will, for a lot in part, correct themselves. Do you agree?

Male: Yeah, don't have a _____.

Owen A. Kogan: I mean just as long as it makes sense, as long as I have it in writing, as long as the goal post doesn't move, if you're gonna pass these laws like the line in 240 – 'cause you have people like Rob Hammer and his co-conspirators out there, multiple felons cheating this stuff, put something in effect that says no is no. Don't do a wink and a nod 'cause it's nonsense. Everybody I know won't abide it.

It's like years ago they were gonna reintroduce fish traps in the Gulf of Mexico, and there was argument about they were gonna have a new environmentally friendly fish trap, but they were studying it. That's like the U.N. studying global thermal nuclear war. There's no winner. It's quite destructive.

I'm, like, give me a break. If they were gonna go – I told 'em two or three years ago, I you're contemplating the unthinkable, then you're making a third-world country, then I might as well fish with syntex and fuse half-sticks and fish 'em deep 'cause no one's gonna follow the law if you do something stupid like that. And the fish traps did fail, thank God. It was not approved.

Make it sensible. Make sure it's not bunny huggers. Make sure it's real science. Make sure everybody follows it and a fixed goal post.

I had one other little method. I don't think this will ever come about, but if they're so hung up with the snapper grouper fetish of who's gonna catch the last snapper and grouper, then they might as well go ahead and say, "Okay, folks, snapper grouper is a commercial species only, and that's all they can catch, and recreational can have everything else." So you don't have to divide the baby. You don't cut the baby in half. You give it to one or the other.

As far as commercial – the fishery, pan fish, yellowtails and mangroves grow very quick. I know commercial fishermen. They're an excellent market-priced fish. They always have a market, and they reproduce fast, and they require a low environmental impact way of catching them. Maybe you wanna steer the fleets back in shallower for pan fish, hook and line versus going out and catching 50-pound gag groupers, which are the brood stock. If you kill the goose that lays the golden egg, we're not gonna have any more golden eggs.

Well, that's all I have to say.

Ben Hartig: Thank you, Owen. I appreciate it.

[End of Audio]