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LEGISLATION

Judicial Investigation into Fishing Quota Allocation in Argentina: Complaints and Request to the Federal Fisheries Council

BY ANTONELLA — NOVEMBER 9, 2024 5 MINUTES

The Justice Department has requested documentation from the Federal Fisheries Council (CFP) on the allocation of Individual Transferable Catch Quotas (CITC) for hake, as part of an investigation initiated by the Office of the Attorney General for Administrative Investigations (PIA). This request is linked to allegations of alleged bribe solicitations from fishing companies by alleged government emissaries.



The Federal Fisheries Council (CFP) has been judicially required to submit all relevant documentation on the procedure for assigning the Individual Transferable Catch Quotas (CITC) for hubbsi hake and black hake, as reported in [CFP Act No. 21/2024](#) point 6.1 which refers to the measure, framed in CFP case No. 4416/2024, where at the request of the Attorney General's Office for Administrative Investigations (PIA), the body that has formally requested access to the administrative records linked to the quota allocation process, in the context of a wide-ranging investigation.

The judicial indictment, received by the CFP on October 24, is closely related to unofficial reports of alleged bribery solicitations that have rocked the fishing sector since September, as reported by the *LPO*. According to these allegations, government emissaries have reportedly demanded millions of dollars from fishing companies to ensure the continued operation of the CITC hubbsi hake regime for the next fifteen years. This situation, which involves high-profile and internationally significant companies, has even been reported to the United States Embassy in Argentina: a fact unknown to us but referenced by the same

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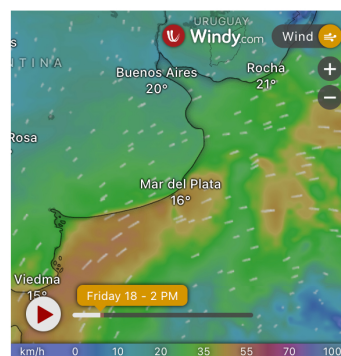
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For his part, current Buenos Aires deputy and former mayor of the General Pueyrredón district, CPN **Gustavo Pulti**, who heads the Maritime Interests Commission in the provincial legislature, **has filed a criminal complaint with the Federal Court in Mar del Plata**. In his complaint, he requests an investigation into the possible existence of a bribery scheme surrounding the renewal of hake catch quotas and also demands that the CFP clarify whether, as a result of these accusations, it has decided to suspend the CITC renewal process. Pulti has stated, however, that he has not received an official response from the fishing agency so far.

For its part, the Office of Administrative Investigations, led by Prosecutor **Sergio Leonardo Rodríguez**, has requested detailed information from the CFP regarding the CITC allocation procedure and has received a response from the Council's Legal Counsel (Dr. **Alejo Toranzo**), as recorded in Minutes No. 21 of last Thursday. At the same time, the Second Federal Prosecutor's Office in Mar del Plata, led by Prosecutor **Santiago Eyherabide**, is continuing an independent investigation, stemming from the initial complaint filed by legislator Pulti.

As an entity within the Attorney General's Office, the PIA is responsible for investigating acts of corruption and irregularities within the National Administration. Its involvement in this case underscores the seriousness of the allegations and highlights the importance of clarifying any irregularities in the allocation of common hake CITCs, in order to protect both transparency in the sector and the integrity of the fishing regime in national waters.

Origin of Events

On September 12, Provincial Deputy Gustavo Pulti filed a criminal complaint with the Second Federal Prosecutor's Office in Mar del Plata, accusing officials linked to the **Javier Milei** administration of alleged bribes in the recent fishing quota renewal process. In his role as president of the Maritime, Port and Fisheries Interests Committee of the Buenos Aires Chamber of Deputies, Pulti justified the action by citing his legal responsibility to report any evidence of a crime and his commitment to protecting the interests of the port of Mar del Plata and its industry following information published on September 4 of this year by the news outlet **La Política Online** (LPO) under the title, "[The version of a \\$15 million bribe request to the fishing companies reaches the United States Embassy](#)," which details the alleged irregularities in the framework of the hubbsi hake quota system.

Pulti emphasizes that, despite the seriousness of the situation and its widespread media coverage, Milei's government has failed to respond, taking the matter from a legal area to the political sphere.

In his complaint, Pulti argues that this alleged bribery scheme not only involves extortion of fishing industry entrepreneurs, who were allegedly forced to pay to maintain their quotas, but could also constitute a crime under Article 265 of the Penal Code. He also warns that this practice could seriously impact the local and national fishing sector, which is key to the economy of Mar del Plata and provides tens of thousands of jobs.

proceed with the measures of justice.

Finally, Pulti urges the courts to clarify the case and warns that government inaction undermines the credibility of institutions, affecting the confidence of those seeking to invest in the country's development. These events allegedly triggered the court's request to the Federal Fisheries Council itself, as stated—we reiterate—in point 6.1 of the minutes of the meeting held last Wednesday and Thursday.

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