



U.S DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
National Marine Sanctuary Program

West Coast Region
99 Pacific Street, Bldg. 200, Suite K
Monterey, CA 93940

December 16, 2008

Kathy Fosmark, Co-Chair
Frank Emerson, Co-Chair
Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
256 Figueroa Street #1
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Kathy and Frank:

I am writing in response to your November 18, 2008 letter to me regarding the October 29, 2008 comment letter I sent to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) on its IFQ process. The letter I sent was brief and intended to applaud the PFMC for its consideration of innovative fishery management actions.

I would like to clarify that my primary intent in commenting was to indicate support for the IFQ process and a desire to begin a discussion with the PFMC and interested parties about promoting sustainable fishing practices in national marine sanctuaries. Consistent with this, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) has been partnering with the Nature Conservancy to evaluate alternative trawling gear to reduce habitat damage and bycatch. I also support the recently finalized benthic habitats action plan in the revised MBNMS management plan, which has identified strategies to protect benthic communities and ecological processes while allowing continuation of long-term sustainable fisheries.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has made no decisions whatsoever as to which gear types are the best or worst for a national marine sanctuary on the west coast. Moreover, my letter does not single out any particular sanctuary for any particular management regime. My point in initiating a dialogue with the PFMC was to highlight that fishing gear that reduces or eliminates bycatch and habitat damage, while also allowing for an economically viable fishery, is a winning combination.

The issue of bottom trawling on the west coast is complex. As you know, the PFMC and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service closed significant areas on the west coast to bottom trawling to protect essential fish habitat. California and Washington state have largely banned bottom trawling within state waters. Tribal fisheries conducted in Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary are not regulated by the PFMC and thus my letter was not germane to their activity.

Commercial and recreational fishing are suffering on the west coast, particularly in California. The time has come for all parties to collaborate to find solutions for today and tomorrow so we can have healthy ecosystems supporting healthy, sustainable fisheries well into the future. If

Olympic Coast
National Marine Sanctuary
115 E. Railroad Ave., Ste 301
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Cordell Bank
National Marine Sanctuary
P.O. Box 159
Olema, CA 94950

Gulf of the Farallones
National Marine Sanctuary
Building 991, Presidio of SF
San Francisco, CA 94129

Monterey Bay
National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
Monterey, CA 93940

Channel Islands
National Marine Sanctuary
113 Harbor Way
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

national marine sanctuaries on the west coast can help in any way, I am interested in finding solutions together. To that end, I extend an offer to meet with you and any members of the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries to have a positive, forward reaching dialogue. If you are interested, please contact me or Lisa Wooninck (831 647-1920) to find a time for such a meeting.

Let me close by noting that the West Coast Regional Office and the west coast national marine sanctuaries are proud of our record of collaboration with the PFMC. The recently-concluded joint management plan review for the central California national marine sanctuaries is but one example of how we can address issues – such as krill harvesting, and benthic habitat protections at Cordell Bank and Davidson Seamount – by working together to meet our shared goals. I look forward to that continued relationship with the PFMC on future issues and opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Douros". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

William J. Douros
Regional Director

cc: The Honorable Sam Farr
Jack Dunnigan, Assistant Administrator NOS
Don Hansen, Chairman PFMC
Don McIsaac, Executive Director PFMC