Mr. James H. Lone, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224
Portland, Oregon 97201

Dear Mr. Lone:

United Anglers of Southern California (UASC) is the largest California Association dedicated to restoring California’s fisheries and marine habitat. Friends from the undersigned national sportfishing conservation organizations join us in this letter. Collectively we represent hundreds of thousands of American recreational anglers and the industries that they support. We are all concerned about the lack of balanced interests among the members of the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Advisory Subpanel.

This Subpanel consists of 8 members representing commercial fishing and processing sectors and only 2 members representing the diverse West Coast recreational fishing community. We believe that this imbalance is unfair, inappropriate, and a great disservice to the angling community. The lack of representation diminishes the importance of recreational angling to our citizens and coastal economies. In California alone saltwater anglers provide $1.8 billion in annual economic impact and create over 12,000 full time jobs. The Council’s ability to make good, conservation oriented decisions on issues such as the possibility of a new longline fishery and the allocation of striped marlin has been compromised by the lack of adequate representation from the recreational sector.

The highly migratory species comprise an important resource for anglers along the West Coast, and particularly in California. We want to assure that these resources are managed for healthy stock abundance and recreational angling opportunities. We believe that it is incumbent on the Council to reconstitute the Subpanel with equal representation from recreational and commercial participants in this fishery.
The HMS-FMP that your Council is charged with developing is too important an effort to not do properly from this early fact finding stage through to the final decisions. The needed input from our side of this fishery has been missing to this point. We ask that you assure the integrity of the plan development process by balancing representation on the Subpanel and extending the time-frame for final action on the FMP until March 2002. This extension will allow for additional recreational community input that has been lost during the last six months.

We would further ask that you adopt these changes during the coming October 30 through November 3 PFMC meeting.

Sincerely,

Tom Raftican
United Anglers of Southern California

Ellen Peal
The Billfish Foundation

Jim Donofrio
Recreational Fishing Alliance

Mike Nussman
American Sportfishing Association