

PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Dear Reviewer:

The enclosed document – *Volume 1: Status of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Through 2004, Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation: Stock Assessments and Rebuilding Plans* (Volume 1 of the SAFE document)– provides individual stock assessments for two Pacific Coast groundfish species assessed in 2003 and one assessed in 2004, the associated Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel reports for each assessment, the most recent Terms of Reference for STAR Panels, and four species' rebuilding plans adopted under Fishery Management Plan Amendment 16-2. The assessments and associated reports provided in this document include those for lingcod coastwide, cabezon occurring in waters off California, and Pacific whiting coastwide. The Amendment 16-2 rebuilding plans provided in this document include those for canary rockfish, lingcod, darkblotched rockfish, and Pacific ocean perch.

All of the assessments included in this document have associated STAR Panel review reports, which summarize the issues that arose during the scientific peer review process.

Volume 2 of the 2004 SAFE document will contain the fishery catch data and other biological, management, and socioeconomic data references relevant to West Coast groundfish management. This will be published and distributed in the fall of 2004 and will include catch accountability data from the 2003 season.

Sincerely,



D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

JDD:rdd