



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
99 Pacific Street, Bldg 455a
Monterey, CA 93940

Agenda Item E.5.a
NMS Report
April 2015

March 20, 2015

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

RE: Support for including the MBNMS Collaborative Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Proposal in the Pacific Coast Groundfish EFH scoping process

Dear Chair Lowman:

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) process to modify EFH designations and management measures for Pacific coast groundfish.

In July 2013, the Collaborative Groundfish EFH Proposal in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) was submitted as a result of many months of discussion with the local trawl fleet, conservation organizations, and MBNMS. The proposal reflects desires of community stakeholders for groundfish EFH, as it relates to protecting fragile groundfish EFH, as well as restoring access to some economically important trawl fishing grounds within the sanctuary. The submission included letters of support from each of the stakeholders and continues to represent an important accomplishment for local fishing and conservation interests.

The coalition would like to restate their support for this proposal and respectfully requests that the Council include it in the EFH scoping process beginning in April. We believe the proposal represents an improvement for both conservation and fishing opportunities, and the changes are consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

We acknowledge recent discussions with board members of the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries regarding their concerns about the proposed modifications moving beyond trawl gear to fixed gear. We would like to re-articulate the intent of this proposal, which is to **request changes for bottom trawl EFH boundaries only**, and clarify that the proposal is not requesting any changes to fixed gear regulations, either now or in the future. There are no fixed gear regulation changes included in the proposal.

We further recognize that areas 14 and 15 in the southern portion of MBNMS do not reflect full consensus, and we plan to revisit these boundary modifications as part of the Council's review process.



Lastly, we recognize that our proposal is an initial offering as a component of what will become a fishery management plan amendment, in which considerations of EFH designations will occur on the scale of the entire west coast, and that trawl Rockfish Conservation Area modifications could be included in area adjustments. This proposal did not consider changes to the trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas, as at the time this topic was beyond the scope of the Council's RFP. We request that if any changes are made to our collaborative community proposal, the Council include input from our collaborative group to ensure the integrity of our proposal is maintained.

We close by reminding the Council that this proposal was submitted by the following collaborating organizations: Monterey Bay trawl fishermen, the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries, the City of Monterey, Oceana, Natural Resources Defense Council, Ocean Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, and the California Groundfish Collective (used to be CA Risk Pool) including The Nature Conservancy, Fort Bragg Groundfish Association, Half Moon Bay Groundfish Marketing Association, and Central California Seafood Marketing Association. The proposal also received written support from the local elected officials, including Congressman Farr and California Assemblymember Stone.

If you have any questions please direct them to Karen Grimmer, the sanctuary lead for this community proposal at (831) 647-4253 or karen.grimmer@noaa.gov. Thank you for accepting our comments and support for consideration of this proposal for regional modifications to groundfish EFH boundaries.



Paul Michel
Superintendent, MBNMS

Supporting fishermen & organizations

Giuseppe Pennisi, Jr

John Pennisi

Jiri Nozicka

Keith Marshall

David Crabbe

Lisa Damrosch, Michelle Norvell, & Rob and Tiffani Seitz for the California Groundfish Collective

Chuck Della Sala, Mayor, and Steve Scheiblaue, Harbormaster, City of Monterey

Geoff Shester, Oceana

Seth Atkinson, Natural Resources Defense Council

Huff McGonigal, Environmental Defense Fund

Kate Kauer, The Nature Conservancy

Greg Helms, Ocean Conservancy

