



April 2, 2015

Dorothy Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, #101
Portland, OR 97220

RE: Agenda Item B.1 – Open Comment Period: March Final Action on Unmanaged Forage Fish Protection Initiative

Dear Chair Lowman and Council Members:

We write to express our appreciation for the Council taking final action in March to adopt the first comprehensive ecosystem-based amendment to protect unmanaged forage species. We enjoyed participating in the Council process to advance ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) in general, and to develop and implement this initiative in particular.

Engaging in this process was and continues to be a rewarding experience for Pew on several fronts. Primarily, we are pleased the Council took action to protect a large, and previously unprotected, component of the forage base that supports our fisheries, fishing communities, and the broader ocean ecosystem. This action represents a significant conservation achievement for the Council.

In developing and enacting this initiative, the Council demonstrated that under current Magnuson-Stevens Act authority it is possible for Councils to take definitive actions to: protect marine food webs; ensure new fishing activities do not begin without adequate scientific review to show they will not harm existing fisheries or the broader ecosystem; and adopt fishery ecosystem plans that result in management action through existing fishery management plans (FMPs). There has been considerable debate on all three of these issues and, with passage of the forage fish protection initiative, this Council has definitively shown that the tools to protect marine food webs are available.

Finally, we enjoyed introducing new constituencies to federal fisheries management. Regional Fishery Management Councils are not well-known to the general public and this forage initiative brought new people into the process, including tour guides, restaurant owners, bird watchers, beach enthusiasts and more. Perhaps most rewarding is the fact that this initiative received unanimous support at the Council, and across the spectrum of advisory bodies and members of the public, showing that we all want healthy and vibrant ocean ecosystems.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our appreciation. We look forward to continuing to work with you to maintain healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul Shively".

Paul Shively
Project Director, U.S. Oceans, Pacific
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