



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
West Coast Region  
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.  
Seattle, Washington 98115

April 3, 2014

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

Dear Chair Lowman:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) shares the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) goal, as NMFS understood it, of a January 1, 2015 implementation date for the 2015-2016 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures regulations.

NMFS understood the Council to be contemplating an initial focus on the harvest specifications and management measures necessary to achieve the specifications or address conservation concerns as a strategy to narrow issues in order to achieve the January 1 objective. NMFS believes the decisions of the Council in November, 2013 went beyond this scope.

NMFS believes the Council would benefit from increased clarity on the current scope of proposals so that there is no misunderstanding about its effect on the schedule for completion. We request that you task the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to provide a report to the Council on the current range of management measures to determine which measures are needed to meet harvest specifications or address conservation concerns, and which measures do not meet this criterion.

This report could provide the Council important information to consider in determining whether the original January 1, 2015 objective remains a priority. If January remains important, the GMT report will provide a useful tool in decision-making to narrow the range of analyses to allow completion of a draft environmental impact statement in time to support a final Council decision on 2015-2016 harvest specifications and management measures during the June meeting.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank Lockhart".

Frank Lockhart  
Groundfish Program Manager  
Sustainable Fisheries Division

cc: Bob Turner  
Don McIsaac  
Dan Erickson

