



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
University of California Santa Barbara
Ocean Science Education Building 514, MC 6155
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-6155

July 31, 2013

Mr. Dan Wolford, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Wolford:

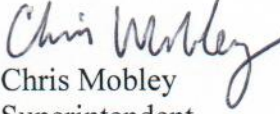
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS or sanctuary) is submitting this letter in response to a request for proposals (RFP) issued by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) on May 1, 2013. The RFP was issued as a result of Council's 5-year review of EFH for Pacific Coast groundfish, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regulatory guidance (50 CFR §600).

Designated in 1980, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary consists of an area of approximately 1,110 square nautical miles (nmi) of coastal and ocean waters, and the submerged lands, off the southern coast of California. CINMS is a special place for species close to extinction, sensitive habitats, shipwrecks and maritime heritage artifacts. Many valuable commercial and recreational activities, such as fishing, shipping, and tourism occur in the sanctuary. A comprehensive ecosystem-based management approach is used to promote long-term conservation of sanctuary waters, wildlife, habitats (including benthic habitats), and cultural resources, while allowing compatible human uses.

The Council and NMFS, through implementation of Amendment 19, designated several groundfish EFH provisions that fall within the boundaries of CINMS. Specifically, the EFH Conservation Area designations are detailed in 50 CFR Part 660.79(r -cc, and gg) and prohibit all bottom contact gear. In addition, National Marine Sanctuary Act regulations prohibit the take of resources from the zones, thus complementing the MSA provisions and establishing comprehensive marine reserves (i.e. no take) and a marine conservation area (i.e. limited take) in the federal waters part of CINMS (71 FR 27408 and 72 FR 29208).

CINMS does not propose adjusting or modifying the existing groundfish EFH designations in the sanctuary. Although we have participated in recent seafloor mapping and ROV expeditions, such as this year's deep sea coral cruise within the sanctuary (as part of NOAA's Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program), we have not yet completed the analyses needed to determine whether there are additional areas that might warrant consideration for EFH designation or protection. As the Council process to modify groundfish EFH unfolds, we remain interested in and willing to review any suggested changes to EFH designations within or near CINMS. Please direct any questions to Sean Hastings at sean.hastings@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,


Chris Mobley
Superintendent