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20TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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October 21, 2013

Mr. Will Stelle, Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Bldg. 1
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

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

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PFMC

Dear Mr. Stelle, Chair Lowman and Members of the Council:

I urge the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to move forward with Phase 3 of the Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) review and initiate the process to amend the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). I also write in strong support of the proposal submitted by Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (Sanctuary) to include areas one through thirteen in the FMP. This innovative, collaborative process was developed by representatives from local government, the fishing industry and environmental organizations from my District. Given the diverse support for these thirteen areas, the Council should adopt the Sanctuary's proposal as a package without making substitutions.

This proposal would add new areas for protection as EFH while simultaneously re-opening historically trawled areas that were of importance to trawl fishermen. If implemented, this proposal would further minimize adverse impacts of bottom trawl fishing to groundfish EFH and simultaneously enhance economic opportunities for local fishermen. It is founded on sound science from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) and the California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). The datasets and analysis from these institutions clearly demonstrate that these unique and sensitive habitats along California's Central Coast are worthy of protection.

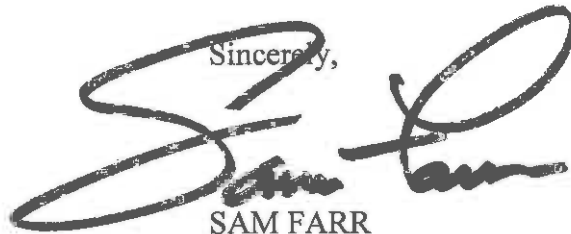
I would like to praise the Sanctuary staff for organizing and facilitating the negotiation process, and commend all the stakeholders for taking the risk to sit down at the table and, over the course

of many months, review the science together and discuss various scenarios in an open and thoughtful manner. My hope is that all the National Marine Sanctuaries will follow this model and not shy away from such a critical task.

Habitat protection, based on sound science and active stakeholder and community participation, is a fundamental management tool that the Council is authorized to employ as it works to restore and sustainably manage our nation's fish populations. The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is one of the prized gems of our ocean. NOAA is authorized to protect and provide for multiple uses of the resources within the Sanctuary. To do so, they must continue to facilitate similar negotiations, bringing stakeholders to the table to work collaboratively from the beginning. This will not only foster trust and understanding between all parties, but also provide a forum to make the hard decisions about how to protect and use the most valued areas in our ocean.

In my view, habitat protection is a critical tool of fishery management and we must encourage all stakeholders to review the best science, work collaboratively to build trust and identify areas for protection that will help us sustainably protect and manage our fish populations. I call on the Council to endorse the outcome of the Sanctuary-facilitated negotiation, thereby empowering the Sanctuary staff, local officials, fishermen and NGOs to continue the challenging work by returning to the negotiating table. There is much more work they must do together.

Sincerely,



SAM FARR
Member of Congress

*Thank you for your
good work!*

cc: Mr. Daniel J. Basta, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Mr. Paul Michel, Superintendent, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

SF/NC