



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
The Under Secretary of Commerce  
for Oceans and Atmosphere  
Washington, D.C. 20230

OCT 25 2002

Dr. Donald O. McIsaac  
Executive Director  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 N.E. Ambassador Place  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

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PFMC

Dear Dr. McIsaac:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) concerns about the establishment of marine reserves within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (Sanctuary). You refer to an August 29, 2002, letter from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) that provided NOAA comments on the CDFG draft environmental document for the establishment of marine reserves in the state waters of the Sanctuary. That letter conveys NOAA's support for the establishment of a network of state-water sites where commercial and recreational fishing would be prohibited or limited. It was prepared jointly by field staff from both the National Marine Fisheries Service and the National Ocean Service, reviewed through both line offices, and reflects NOAA's position on the state's proposal. The procedure used is typical of how NOAA works together on issues that may affect multiple offices within our organization.

I am concerned that you and the Council feel that your efforts in providing input into the consideration of marine reserves within the Sanctuary may have been preempted by our comments on the state proposal. The Council has been a leader in marine conservation efforts on the west coast, as your recent recommendation on the emergency groundfish closure demonstrates, and I believe that NOAA's position in no way diminishes your efforts. NOAA fully encourages meaningful participation by the Council as we begin the process to implement marine reserves in the federal waters portion of the Sanctuary.

I have asked William Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, to look into your concerns and report back to me on how we might improve coordination in the future. I appreciate your comments, and I hope that we can address them to our mutual satisfaction in advancing the management of marine resources off the west coast.

Sincerely,

Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.  
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Under Secretary of Commerce for  
Oceans and Atmosphere