



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

THE DIRECTOR

AUG - 2 2005

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PFMC

Donald O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Dr. ~~McIsaac~~ ^{Bill}:

Thank you for your letter to Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce, regarding the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) decision to send forward a number of Trawl Individual Quota (TIQ) alternatives for the harvest of West Coast Groundfish and Pacific whiting for analysis in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is aware of, and the Northwest regional staff have participated in, the Council's efforts over the past several years to develop TIQs for West Coast Groundfish and Pacific whiting. As a general matter, we support programs to rationalize federally managed fisheries through dedicated access privileges, including individual fishing quotas. The Administration made an explicit pledge of this support in the December 2004 U.S. Ocean Action Plan. Any option proposed by the Council must comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. NMFS will comment more specifically on the TIQ alternatives and the accompanying regulatory assessments when they are received from the Council.

We appreciate the efforts of the Council in managing these valuable resources.

Sincerely,

William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.

