



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southwest Region  
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200  
Long Beach, California 90802- 4213

JAN 26 2006

150413SWR2005SF00591:JBL

Mr. Donald Hansen, Chair  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place  
Portland, Oregon 97220

Dear Mr. Hansen:

By this letter, I am approving Amendment 11 to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a proposed rule to implement Amendment 11 on November 16, 2005 (70 FR 69502) and we expect to publish the final rule to implement Amendment 11 by the end of February 2006.

As you know, Amendment 11 will change the framework for the annual apportionment of the Pacific sardine harvest guideline along the U.S. Pacific coast and set up a new long-term allocation scheme. Based on the new scheme, 35 percent of the harvest guideline would be released coastwide on January 1; 40 percent of the harvest guideline, plus any portion not harvested from the initial 35 percent would be released coastwide on July 1; and the remaining 25 percent, plus any portion not harvested from the earlier releases would then be available for harvest on September 15. Amendment 11 would also establish Point Arena, California (39° N latitude) as the dividing line between the two subareas, as was used during the interim allocation period.

NMFS believes Amendment 11 will help establish an allocation framework leading to the optimal utilization and equitable allocation of the resource between the different sectors of the Pacific sardine fishery. The agency also thinks that the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) recommendation to review the allocation formula in 2008 will be a key step in this ongoing process. In addition, the Council's continued support for new research that may allow for the improvement of the assessment model or provide better data that will help to measure the impacts of the allocation scheme is highly valued.

NMFS appreciates the Council's ongoing efforts to assure an equitable and optimal harvest of the Pacific sardine resource along the west coast.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rodney R. McInnis".

Rodney R. McInnis  
Regional Administrator

