

Agenda Item H.1.a  
Attachment 3  
April 2006

MAR - 7 2006



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

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

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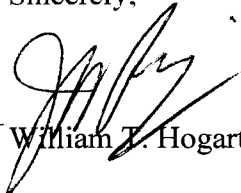
Dear Dr. McIsaac:

Thank you for your letter relaying the recommendations of the Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding the use and distribution of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) funding. As you indicated, we are developing a spending plan and policy for distribution of the funding appropriated in FY 2006. It is important that this funding be obligated before the end of FY 2006; as you know, congressional appropriations are provided each year for the support and funding of initiatives and services within the fiscal year.

Your letter suggested several possibilities for how the funds may be distributed. There are also a number of possible parameters for determining who will be eligible for the funds. Our staff is working to ensure the development and implementation of an equitable, efficient, and effective plan. We intend to develop a system that not only ensures the most effective use and distribution of the current funds in a fair and effective manner, but that produces a credible model to perpetuate and support the appropriation of ongoing funding for this purpose in future years. Given that Congress has recognized the importance of the VMS program, it is our hope that funding levels for the program will remain constant and that we will be able to continue to fund the purchase of VMS units as additional fisheries are brought online.

Our staff has been notified of your recommendations, and they will consider your concerns as we finalize this process.

Sincerely,

  
For William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.

