



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Donald K. Hansen, Chairman Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

December 11, 2007

Mr. Paul Michel, Superintendent
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
299 Foam Street
Monterey, California 93940

Dear Mr. *Paul* Michel:

Thank you for your July 26, 2007 letter regarding the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's (Sanctuary) effort to determine the need for marine protected areas (MPAs) within the Sanctuary, and your phone call soon thereafter. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) reviewed your letter and my briefing of your phone call at its September 10-14, 2007 meeting in Portland, Oregon. The Pacific Council agrees that determining need criteria for MPA establishment is fundamental in gaining the credibility and public confidence necessary for a successful effort. Further, they asked that I present some process suggestions when a meeting occurs on matters of substance between Sanctuary and Pacific Council representatives.

A meeting between Sanctuary and Pacific Council representatives has yet to be scheduled; we hope scheduling efforts will be successful in arranging a meeting in the near future. However, we would like to present the essence of the Pacific Council input on the process for reaching a conclusion to the need question at this time.

We understood the proposed process to include (1) gathering input from your established working group and a variety of other relevant parties, including the Pacific Council, (2) solicitation of further advice at a December Sanctuary Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting, and (3) reaching a final decision by February 2008, where it would be presented at a subsequent SAC meeting. The essence of our proposed alternative process is to expand the decision process to include the step of public review of a proposed (February) decision, before reaching any final conclusion. During such a public review stage, the Pacific Council could offer further input via the process scheduled for our March or April Pacific Council meetings. We can expand upon this concept when we meet with Sanctuary staff to discuss issues of substance.

The Pacific Council remains supportive of the general goals and objectives of the Sanctuary, appreciates the intent being included early in the process, and looks forward to continued coordination. The Pacific Council is interested in receiving an update on the findings of the Marine Protected Areas Working Group that are scheduled to be presented to the Sanctuary Advisory Committee later this month. The Pacific Council will be particularly interested in the criteria used by the Sanctuary in determining the need for MPAs as well as the science and rationale behind MPA alternatives. Additionally, the Pacific Council believes the opportunity to

review the recommendations of the SAC and any MPA alternatives developed by the Sanctuary next February will result in an improved final decision.

The Pacific Council's next two meetings are scheduled for the week of March 9, 2008 in Sacramento, California and the week of April 6, 2008 in Seattle, Washington. These two meetings represent the best opportunity for the Pacific Council to consider the results of your internal analysis of MPAs and develop relevant recommendations.

Again, the Pacific Council looks forward to coordination with the Sanctuary on this important marine resource issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. O. McIsaac", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.

MDB:ckm

c: Council Members

William J. Douros, National Ocean Service, Marine Sanctuaries Division
Huff McGonigal, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Debora Streeter, Sanctuary Advisory Committee Chair