



**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

MAY 21 2008

Mr. Donald K. Hansen  
Chair, Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Ste. 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Hansen:

At its March, 2008 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) was informed by NOAA Fisheries' Southwest Fisheries Science Center (Science Center) that the most recent stock assessment for North Pacific albacore conducted by the International Scientific Committee (ISC) indicated that the 2006 estimate of spawning stock biomass was the second highest in history. However, the Science Center also noted that the ISC reported that the current fishing level was also high, and based on biomass projections fished at current levels, the fishing mortality rate would have to be reduced at the international level.

NOAA Fisheries is aware that the U. S. West Coast North Pacific albacore fleet is not increasing. In its May 23, 2007, letter to me, the Council acknowledged that its Highly Migratory Species Management Team report on current fishing effort demonstrated that U. S. fishing effort on North Pacific albacore was stable and had not increased during the 1996-2005 time period. While this has been true, NOAA Fisheries believes that the Council should begin considering possible management controls to insure that future catch and effort does indeed remain within the bounds of the historical fishing effort.

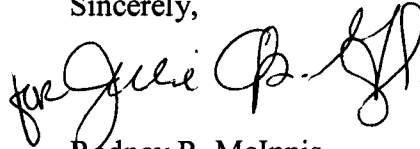
To assist, NOAA Fisheries would be pleased to produce a report for the Council's consideration that will examine potential management options for the North Pacific albacore fishery. These options would in no way be prescriptive but rather, provide sufficient background information to assist the Council in its decision making. It is the agency's intention to have the report completed by this fall.

The Pacific Council is to be commended for its previous work on North Pacific albacore management as reflected by its preparation of the report on current fishing effort and its



efforts to establish daily bag limits for sport caught albacore. The agency is assured that the Council will address potential management of the commercial albacore fishery with similar vigor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "for Julie P. McInnis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "P".

Rodney R. McInnis  
Regional Administrator

cc: Bill Robinson -F/PIRO  
Bob Lohn - F/NWR