

PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224
Portland, Oregon 97201

Telephone: (503) 326-6352

CHAIRMAN
Jerry Mallet

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Lawrence D. Six

April 27, 1999

Mr. Preston A. Sleeper
The Department Of The Interior
Office Of Environmental Policy and Compliance
500 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 356
Portland, OR 97232-2036

Dear Mr. Sleeper:

We are writing you in regards to the New Carissa incident and in your capacity as a natural resource trustee.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) was created by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) in 1976 with the primary role of developing, monitoring, and revising management plans for fisheries conducted within federal waters off Washington, Oregon, and California. Subsequent congressional amendments in 1986, 1990, and in 1996 added emphasis to the Council's role in fishery habitat protection. Amendments in 1996 directed the National Marine Fisheries Service, as well as the regional fishery management councils, to make recommendations regarding federal or state agency activities that may affect the "Essential Fish Habitat" (EFH) of a fishery under its authority. The Magnuson-Stevens Act's amendments also mandate threats to EFH be identified, and that conservation and enhancement measures be described that minimize those adverse impacts. The recent grounding of the New Carissa and fuel oil spill occurred within EFH of numerous groundfish species, and triggered our comments.

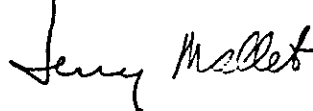
The grounding of the new Carissa and subsequent oil spill caused obvious impacts such as oiled sea birds and temporary closures of shellfish beds. Additional concerns have been expressed by numerous stakeholders including the fishing industry and conservation groups regarding impacts from petroleum products, both immediate and long term, on the marine ecosystem and fisheries resources.

We would like to request the Council be kept apprized of developments in the damage assessment monitoring from the New Carissa spill. Also, we request that restoration and damage decisions take into consideration long term potential impacts and the needs of fisheries resources and the fishing industry to the maximum extent practicable.

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In conclusion, we appreciate the work the Department of Interior and other trustees are undertaking regarding the New Carissa spill. We look forward to working with you in this important process. Please feel free to contact the staff of the Pacific Fishery Management Council at (503) 326-6352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Mallet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "M".

Jerry Mallet
Chairman

SHP:klr

c: Mr. Larry Mangan