



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

JUN 29 2018

Mr. Dan Hull  
Chairman  
North Pacific Fishery Management Council  
Council Coordination Committee  
1007 W 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Suite 100  
Anchorage, AK 99501

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JUL 11 2018

Dear Mr. ~~Hull~~: *Dan*

Thank you for your letter regarding council research priorities and integration of those priorities in the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) science planning.

As discussed during the most recent Council Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting, NMFS does recognize council research priorities, and they are integrated into and affect our planning processes in a variety of ways. In all regions, staff serve on council committees, such as the Scientific and Statistical Committees. In this capacity, staff discuss and review council priorities, which increases awareness of these research priorities in NMFS. Then, as part of our priority-based science planning process, one of the criteria we use to prioritize certain activities and investments is whether the activity/investment is a priority to the councils. In addition, despite these regional connections to council priorities, there may be opportunity for more explicit consolidation, synthesis, and use of council research priorities at the national level, to inform planning and funding decisions, including decisions regarding requests for proposals.

We will review this issue, both nationally and regionally, through discussion with the six science center directors, with an aim that these priorities can be more formally included in annual and long-term science planning for the centers, and also inform priorities in grant funding decisions. The discussion will also touch on the best methods for the science centers to respond to the documents after the councils submit them. The regional fishery management councils are important partners, and we recognize that producing science that is responsive to management needs is critical.

I appreciate your interest in this issue and look forward to further discussion at the next CCC meeting.

Sincerely,

Chris Oliver

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR  
FOR FISHERIES





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Dear Mr. ~~Hull~~: *DAN*

Thank you for your letter expressing the Council Coordination Committee's (CCC) support for the recommendations of the Fishing Data Innovation Taskforce report, "Improving Net Gains: Data-Driven Innovation for America's Fishing Future." I am encouraged by the strong interest of the CCC in improving and modernizing our fisheries data collection and management systems.

In response to the report, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff are collaborating with the Taskforce and the organizations they represent to identify opportunities for private/public partnerships to invest in effective regional and national data modernization efforts. These efforts include the regional fishery management councils, the CCC, and regional state-federal fisheries information networks.

I can highlight some examples of our efforts toward fisheries data modernization. We are updating the 2013 Electronic Technologies Policy Directive to include guidance for regions on developing new implementation plans. The new plans will highlight data integration and interoperability as key components to data modernization and streamlining data reporting, identify resource needs to implement new technologies, and develop new metrics for tracking our performance toward meeting our goals. We also will finalize the electronic monitoring (EM) cost allocation procedural directive this fall and plan to publish a draft policy on EM video retention.

Our Fisheries Information Systems Program, National Observer Program, and other partner programs continue to invest in both regional and national-level projects. We also support the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Electronic Monitoring and Reporting grant program through a Congressional appropriation, which totaled \$3.5 million in FY 2018. Many of these investments fund our regional modernization projects and elements of our regional electronic technology implementation plans.

NMFS is also reviewing our governance and procedures for data and information management, with the intent of developing a strategy for modernizing our fisheries data management system.

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FOR FISHERIES



I appreciate the commitments of the councils to stay involved in the conversations around our data modernization efforts, including discussions to develop and expand our public-private partnerships and internal funding programs to support effective, efficient, and sustainable regional and state data collection and management.

NMFS will continue the dialogue with the councils regarding our progress in addressing the Taskforce recommendations and advancing our data modernization efforts. Your thoughts on how best to engage the Taskforce and our partners, including the councils, are welcome.

Sincerely,



Chris Oliver  
Assistant Administrator  
for Fisheries