



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232

June 10, 2019

Mr. Phil Anderson, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place
Portland, OR 97220

Dear Mr. Anderson:

On behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, I have approved Amendment 17 to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). We published a Notice of Availability for Amendment 17 in the Federal Register on March 22, 2019 ([84 FR 10768](#)). We intend to publish a Federal Register Notice announcing our approval of Amendment 17 and respond to public comments we received on the Notice of Availability soon.

Amendment 17 removed the pre-specified incidental landing limit that would become effective for live bait were a stock managed under the CPS FMP to become overfished. Prior to Amendment 17, if a CPS stock were to become overfished, and even prior to adoption of a rebuilding plan, the FMP would have automatically limited retention of live bait of that stock to incidentally caught fish with no more than 15 percent of any load being live bait from the overfished stock. This would have caused a de facto closure for catching the overfished stock as live bait, which could disrupt various recreational fisheries. Amendment 17 provides the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) flexibility in recommending restrictions on the live bait portion of the fishery when a stock is overfished.

There are no implementing regulations associated with Amendment 17; therefore, we did not publish a proposed or final rule to implement this amendment. The provisions of Amendment 17 are effective upon the date of this letter.

We expect to change the stock status of Pacific sardine to “overfished” before the June or September 2019 Council meetings. Therefore, our approval of Amendment 17 will affect our forthcoming determination on the proposed live bait management measures for Pacific sardine for the 2019-2020 fishing year. At the April 2019 Council meeting, the Council recommended that live bait harvest for Pacific sardine be permitted if the Secretary approves Amendment 17. We will consider this recommendation along with any public comments received on the proposed Pacific sardine harvest specifications prior to implementing final harvest specifications.

We appreciate the Council’s collaboration on CPS management. If you have questions, please contact Ryan Wulff, Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region, at 916-930-3733.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barry A. Thom".

Barry A. Thom
Regional Administrator

