



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

June 9, 2023

Mr. Marc Gorelnik, Chair  
Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
7700 Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, OR 97220

**RE: Agenda item C.8 Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning**

Dear Chairman Gorelnik:

On behalf of Greater Farallones and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries (GFNMS, MBNMS, or sanctuaries), we are providing comments regarding Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning. The purpose of this letter is to share our intent to request that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) consider a process starting in September 2023 that can meet our sanctuaries' needs for deep-sea coral (DSC) research and restoration.

The comment period for the [Draft Restoration Plan and NEPA Evaluation for the YFD-70 Dry Dock](#) (Restoration Plan) authored by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) has closed, and our staff have been working to identify more precise locations within the five previously-identified larger areas outlined in the Restoration Plan. We hosted two workshops with DSC researchers from around the country on May 22 and 31, 2023 to help ONMS identify areas that are of sufficient size to outplant corals, include sufficient buffers for regional propagules/growth of additional corals, and are of sufficient size to answer community-level research questions related to understanding DSC communities at different depths. Answering these research questions would contribute to the DSC research mandates in the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act [16 U.S.C. § 1884 (a)], may further our understanding of fish associations with DSC, and may help describe and identify essential fish habitat.

The information shared at the workshops will inform an ONMS request for additional fisheries management measures to protect the identified areas. To that end, if such measures may be warranted, ONMS would intend to present options for potential scoping in September 2023 in accordance with the process outlined in the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) [16 U.S.C. § 1434 (a)(5)]. In order to adequately prepare for this request, we are developing materials that can provide the basis for scoping should the PFMC take the opportunity to prepare draft regulations for fishing as deemed necessary.

We look forward to opportunities to share more information for the September 2023 briefing book and plan to have staff available at the June 2023 PFMC meeting to share preliminary areas and answer questions as needed. Thank you for considering this request to engage with the PFMC and the requirement of ONMS to restore sanctuary resources under the NMSA. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Reyna at 415-970-5247 or [karen.reyna@noaa.gov](mailto:karen.reyna@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Maria Brown in black ink.

Maria Brown, Superintendent  
Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank  
National Marine Sanctuaries

Handwritten signature of Lisa Wooninck in black ink.

Lisa Wooninck, Ph.D., Superintendent  
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

cc: Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council  
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council