



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

Northwest Region
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1
Seattle, Washington 98115

JUN 7 2012

Phil Anderson, Director
Washington Department of Fish and
Wildlife
600 Capitol Way N
Olympia, WA 98501

Charlton H. Bonham, Director
California Department of Fish and Game
1416 Ninth Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Roy Elicker, Director
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
3406 Cherry Avenue N.E.
Salem, OR 97303

Virgil Moore, Director
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25
Boise, ID 83707

Dear Directors:

The Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council) is considering an amendment to the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) that would, among other things, modify the schedule for setting annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries beginning in 2014. Before we proceed further with this initiative, it would be useful to know whether you think that a change in schedule would have a substantive effect on the fishery or complicate the states' process for adopting conforming regulations.

Currently, the Council and advisory bodies meet in the first or second week of April to develop their recommendation to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the salmon fishing season which starts May 1st and the following year's fisheries that are anticipated prior to May 1st of the next year (subject to change at the March Council meeting). Because some of the fisheries, largely north of Cape Falcon, are constrained by international agreements with Canada, Council-area fisheries cannot be set until population forecasts and fisheries in Alaska and Canada are set. Information regarding northern fisheries is usually not available until immediately before the April Council meeting, limiting our ability, under the current schedule, to do the necessary planning through the North of Falcon process, and to provide accurate assessments of fishery constraints at public hearings. I understand this timing problem is likely to persist. NMFS and the Council are considering a shift in the date of the April meeting and a corresponding shift in the starting date of the ocean salmon "regulatory year." Under consideration is rescheduling the April Council meeting to the third full week of April and shifting the start of the salmon regulatory year from May 1st to May 15th, beginning in 2014. Annual management measures would set fisheries beginning May 15th of that year and also set the following year's fisheries that are anticipated prior to May 15th of the next year (subject to change at the March or, possibly, April Council meetings). We do not anticipate any substantial impact to the fishing community from such a scheduling change, as May fisheries would continue as before.

Moving the April Council meeting to the third week in April would provide more time after the March Council meeting to develop briefing materials and obtain public comment on alternative



management measures, and would result in less compressed travel schedules for those involved in the Council process.

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of this potential schedule change and inquire as to whether this change would impact the state's ability to develop and implement conforming regulations. As NMFS works with the Council on this amendment, I would also be interested to know whether you foresee any other substantive effects that might occur as a result of the proposed change in schedule. We anticipate proposing this amendment at the September 2012 Council meeting. The briefing book deadline for that meeting is August 23rd. We would therefore need to know well in advance of this date if the states have any concern regarding this proposal. Please feel free to contact me or Peter Dygert, Salmon Harvest Management Branch Chief (206-526-6734 or peter.dygert@noaa.gov) regarding any concerns or questions you may have on this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Turner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Turner
Assistant Regional Administrator
Salmon Management Division

cc:

Pat Patillo, WDFW
Doug Milward, WDFW
Steve Williams, ODFW
Eric Schindler, ODFW
Marija Vojkovich, CDFG
Jennifer Simon, CDFG
Scott Barrow, CDFG
Cal Groen, IDFG
Don McIssac, PFMC