



January 18, 2017

Ms. Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Eileen:

On behalf of the Council Coordination Committee, I would like to thank you for your strong support of the Regional Fishery Management Councils during your three-year tenure as Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. You clearly showed that we were partners in the management of federal fisheries.

During this period, we witnessed the National Marine Fisheries Service's extensive efforts to update and prepare numerous agency strategies and implementation plans. Last fall, the revised National Standard 1 guidelines were published, and these revisions also addressed many Council concerns related to ecosystem-based fishery management and other requirements in a way that now provides more flexibility to Councils. We also appreciate your commitment to addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing issues, which affects not just domestic fisheries, but resource management on a global scale. Other strategy updates addressed over the course of your tenure covered some admittedly complex issues, including climate change, recreational saltwater fishing, electronic monitoring, and review of catch share programs and allocations. In all cases, under your leadership the agency sought the opinions of the Councils. We also recognize we sometimes grumble about the pace of policy development and the difficulty of having comment periods that don't meet the schedules of every Council, but be assured that we appreciated the diligent approach you took, and the flexibility you provided when possible, in consistently requesting and considering our input.

In 2016, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which created our Regional Fishery Management Council system. Since 1976 – the year that this historic piece of legislation was approved by Congress – we have made considerable progress towards achieving and maintaining sustainable fisheries. Obviously, challenges remain and we do not intend to rest on our laurels, but we feel confident that continued progress is assured if the agency and the Councils continue the close relationship that you fostered over the last three years. We wish you well and the best of luck as you depart the agency and seek out new challenges.

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Quinn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D.
Council Coordination Committee Chairman