

May 29, 2012



Samuel D. Rauch
Acting Assistant Administrator of Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Springs, MD 20910



Dear Sam:

The convening of a National Scientific and Statistical Committee (National SSC) was a recommendation of the second conference in the series, Managing Our Nations Fisheries in 2005. The National SSC and its the working groups have provided guidance on national fishery management issues, particularly those dealing with Acceptable Biological Catches, ecosystem based management, and optimum yield in a catch limit management setting. Unfortunately, the quality products and recommendations of the National SSC *ad hoc* working groups did not constitute formal technical guidance, as they were neither formally commissioned by the Council Coordination Committee nor National Marine Fisheries Service.



As such, the CCC recommends the creation of a National SSC whose membership would be comprised of the eight SSC Chairs (or their designees) and a senior NMFS staff as an ex-officio member. Technical support for this committee would be provided by personnel from the NMFS Office of Science and Technology and Council staff. A Standard Operating Practices and Procedures (SOPP) should be developed that would govern the operations of the National SSC and Terms of Reference (TOR) to direct its activities. The National SSC would be tasked with the development of a prospectus for proposed Working Groups and topics for future National SSC Workshops in consultation with the CCC. These proposals would be reviewed and approved by the CCC as part of the specification of the TOR and could be sponsored by one of the Councils or brought to NMFS for consideration for sponsorship.




The membership of national WGs approved by the CCC would be based on nominations from each Council's SSC (maximum of one SSC member per Council) and one member from NMFS. The Chair of the WG would be appointed by the National SSC (selected from the WG roster). The WG would submit a final report to the CCC that would include recommendations to address the TOR. The final report may be subject to external peer review, the level of which would be determined on a case-by-case basis, based on agreement between the CCC and NMFS. Following peer review of the WG report, the report would be published as a NMFS Technical Memorandum, or other appropriate mechanism, such that it meets the requirements for formal national technical guidance to the Councils.



Thank you and we look forward to your response and action on this matter.

Sincerely,


Manuel P. Duenas
Chairman



Fishery Management Council



Region Fishery Management Council Chairs & Executive Directors



Western Pacific Council
Manuel Duenas, Chair
Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director

South Atlantic Council
David M. Cupka, Chair
Robert Mahood, Executive Director



Pacific Council
Dan Wolford, Chair
Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

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Carlos Farchette, Chair
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