

November 6, 2020

Mr. Chris Oliver
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Chris,

The Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) at its virtual meeting on September 23-24, 2020, heard a report on the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee recommendation to reestablish the National Seafood Council. The CCC discussed the broader need for NMFS to support fisheries managed through the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) and endorsed a recommendation requesting NMFS evaluate NOAA FishWatch criteria for the purpose of serving as an equivalent to third-party certification deeming US fishery products as sustainable. In addition, the CCC requests NMFS report back on the utility of FishWatch for this purpose and any possible alternatives by the May 2021 CCC meeting.

Third-party certification impacts US fishing fleets and undermines consumer confidence in US-caught seafood. US fisheries are, by the nature of the MSA, inherently sustainable per NOAA and the Department of Commerce approval of the Councils' fishery management plans. A federal label noting this sustainability would put all US seafood on equal footing in the market and be a source of pride for US consumers. We appreciate your continued support of US fisheries as managed through the Regional Fishery Management Councils under the MSA and the sustainable seafood it provides the nation and look forward to the NMFS report.

Sincerely,



Taotasi Archie Soliai, Chair
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council



Mike Luisi, Chair
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council



Marc Gorelnik, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council



Marcos Henke, Chair
Caribbean Fishery Management Council



Dr. John Quinn, Chairman
New England Fishery Management Council



Mel Bell, Chair
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council



Simon Kinneen, Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council



Dr. Thomas Frazer, Chair
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

