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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries | West Coast Region
99 Pacific Street, Bldg 100, Suite F
Monterey, CA 93940

May 6, 2015

Mr. Chris Oliver, Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Subject: Response to NPFMC's February 27, 2015 Letter

Dear Mr. Oliver:

I want to first thank you for the opportunity to make a presentation to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) at its February 2015 meeting regarding the National Marine Sanctuary System and for your February 27, 2015 letter regarding the request by the NPFMC for consultations on future national marine sanctuary nominations in waters offshore Alaska. I want to confirm that we are committed to involving NPFMC, and other regional fishery management councils, at appropriate times throughout the national marine sanctuary nomination and designation processes.

As you know, the Sanctuary Nomination Process provides communities around the country the opportunity to put their ideas forward for protecting the most special marine areas in our nation's marine and Great Lakes waters. Our process requires nominators to engage in extensive local, regional and even national-level discussions about the merits of and purposes for a national marine sanctuary nomination before submitting a nomination to NOAA. As we have already seen, several nominators have taken that step seriously and enlisted a broad diversity of supporters, including resource managers.

Nonetheless, we envision that some nominations will not be discussed with all relevant local, state, federal or tribal governments prior to submission. In response to your letter, we will distribute to the NPFMC a copy of any nomination we receive for a national marine sanctuary offshore Alaska. We will also always post those nominations and other pertinent materials on the website www.nominate.noaa.gov. I would like to reiterate as well, per my commitment above, that there will be times during the nomination process we will seek recommendations and guidance from the regional fishery management councils.

As we discussed, when a nomination is forwarded into a national marine sanctuary designation process, NEPA requires extensive public and interagency consultation. Further, Section 304(a)(5) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act provides the regional fishery management councils the opportunity to consider fishing regulations during a national marine sanctuary designation.

Olympic Coast
National Marine Sanctuary
115 E. Railroad Avenue
Suite 301
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Cordell Bank
National Marine Sanctuary
P.O. Box 159
Olema, CA 94950

Gulf of the Farallones
National Marine Sanctuary
The Presidio
991 Marine Drive
San Francisco, CA 94129

Monterey Bay
National Marine Sanctuary
99 Pacific Street
Suite 455A
Monterey, CA 93940

Channel Islands
National Marine Sanctuary
U.C. Santa Barbara
Ocean Science Bldg 514, MC 6155
Santa Barbara, CA 93106



I look forward to working with you, your staff and the NPFMC should any nomination for a national marine sanctuary off Alaska be submitted in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Douros". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

William J. Douros
Regional Director

cc: Eileen Sobeck, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries
James Balsiger, Alaska Regional Administrator, NOAA Fisheries
Daniel Basta, Director, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries