



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration**  
*National Marine Fisheries Service*  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau Alaska 99802-1668

November 7, 2016

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

Dear Chris:

We have approved Amendment 101 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (RIN 0648-BF42). This amendment authorized the use of longline pot gear in the Gulf of Alaska sablefish individual fishing quota fishery. When it recommended Amendment 101, the Council also recommended a regulatory amendment with specific management measures to mitigate potential negative impacts of the action on vessels using hook-and-line gear. The measures are intended to further reduce the low likelihood that longline pot gear would be deployed on the Gulf of Alaska fishing grounds for extended periods of time and result in gear conflicts and grounds preemption.

The Council also recommended a halibut regulatory amendment to require retention of legal size halibut (32 inches or greater) caught in longline pot gear in the Gulf of Alaska sablefish individual fishing quota fishery. A final rule to implement Amendment 101 will follow at a later date.

Sincerely,

James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.  
Administrator, Alaska Region



S:\Amendment 101 (GOA) Sablefish Pot\FMP amendment approval\BF42 GOA Am 101 FMP approval to Council.ltr.docx

R:\region\archives\2016\nov\BF42 GOA Am 101 FMP approval to Council.ltr.docx