

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Dan Hull, Chairman
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February 17, 2017

Dr. James Balsiger, Chairman
International Pacific Halibut Commission
2320 West Commodore Way, Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98199-1287

Dear Dr. Balsiger:

At our February meeting in Seattle, the Council received a report from IPHC staff summarizing the outcomes of the IPHC Annual Meeting in Victoria, B.C. We appreciate their communications to the Council, recognizing that a more complete report and follow-up letters to agencies such as the Council, with additional details on Commission actions, have yet to be finalized. I also want to note that the new reporting format introduced at the 2016 interim meeting is a welcome improvement in recording and communicating actions by the Commission that will be helpful to the Council and others.

During our meeting week, the Council held a separate workshop to solicit public input on our initiative to develop an abundance-based management (ABM) approach to setting halibut PSC limits in the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries. The workshop was well attended and the inter-agency workgroup will continue to work in the coming weeks to update the discussion paper (with consideration of input from the workshop) in preparation for review at our April Council meeting in Anchorage. We greatly appreciate the participation of Dr. Allan Hicks, who helped lead the public workshop, in this ABM initiative.

In light of expected progress on the development of ABM indices, control rules and measurable goals and objectives, the Council believes that a potential joint NPFMC-IPHC meeting has continued merit, and that such a meeting might be most conveniently held in conjunction with our June Council meeting in Juneau, Alaska in early June. Other issues, including research priorities, may also be appropriate for discussion at a joint meeting. We will keep the Commission apprised of logistics and possible scheduling, and to that end we suggest holding another informal teleconference between the leadership of the two bodies, as we did last November, to further discuss the need and timing for such a joint meeting. We suggest that such a teleconference be held sometime in March so that we have time to plan for a potential joint meeting in June.

Regardless of the outcome of the idea for a more formalized joint committee as was raised at your recent annual meeting (and for which we are awaiting further details from the Commission), we believe that the informal meetings of Council and Commission leadership are a very useful forum for overall communication and joint planning.

Finally, I have decided to step down as the Council's representative to the Management Strategy Advisory Board, given my other responsibilities as Chairman. Now that the MSAB has a well developed TOR, and

more specific tasking to review the Commission's harvest policy, development of SPR and biologically based methods to apportionment, it's appropriate for another Council member to take my place. In my place, the Council requests the IPHC appoint Craig Cross, whose experience and knowledge with our domestic federal management harvest policies and the groundfish fisheries will be valuable to the work of the MSAB and their investigation of SPR-based harvest policies.

Please feel free to contact me, or our Executive Director Chris Oliver, at any time to discuss any of these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Hull". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Hull
Chairman

CC: Dr. David Wilson, Executive Director, IPHC
Mr. Paul Ryall, Vice-Chair IPHC