

October 14, 1977

Mr. Robert W. Schoning, Director
National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA
3300 Whitehaven Street, Page Bldg. 2
Washington, D.C. 20235

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your letter of October 7 in explanation of the National Marine Fisheries Service's actions with regard to a harbor at St. Paul Island.

We appreciate your active interest in this project which so closely parallels that of the Council. We will stay in contact with Harry Rietze and work with you in any way possible to further this project.

Sincerely,

Jim H. Branson
Executive Director

cc: Harry Rietze
All Council members (50)

JHB:in



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Washington, D.C. 20235

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OCT 7 1977

Mr. Jim H. Branson
Executive Director, North Pacific
Fishery Management Council
P.O. Box 3136DT
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

OCT 14 1977

Dear Mr. Branson:

We are in full agreement with the Council on the benefits which a harbor at St. Paul Island would afford the U.S. fishing industry in developing the Bering Sea fisheries. We also have another interest which is to improve the economic viability of the Aleut residents of the Pribilof Islands, by affording them employment, including fishing and allied service industries as an alternative to Federal employment that has been predominant on the islands.

As you may be aware, the Corps of Engineers did some preliminary examination of the problem beginning about 1972 and came to the conclusion that the cost/benefit ratio was not high enough to justify further work. Since this decision was reached by the Corps, sporadic efforts have taken place by various groups to reinterest the Corps in the study. With the advent of extended jurisdiction, it appeared that the economic benefits, as well as other benefits such as vessel and crew safety, had changed sufficiently to warrant further study by the Corps. The Alaska Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service cooperated in preparing a paper which was transmitted to the Alaska District of the Corps in an attempt to obtain reactivation of the St. Paul Harbor project. A copy of the transmittal letter and the paper are enclosed.

The District was sufficiently impressed with the new information, that they requested FY79 funds for further work on the project but are unsure whether the funds will be forthcoming. The studies would include: 1) an updated environmental assessment, 2) exploration - essentially bottom coring to determine foundation materials, 3) hydrographics, and 4) economic analysis - reflecting annual benefits.

Since the studies could not be done by the Corps until at least FY79, the National Marine Fisheries Service has been investigating the possibility of utilizing our funding to contract for the necessary studies. However, we have not yet identified funds which could be

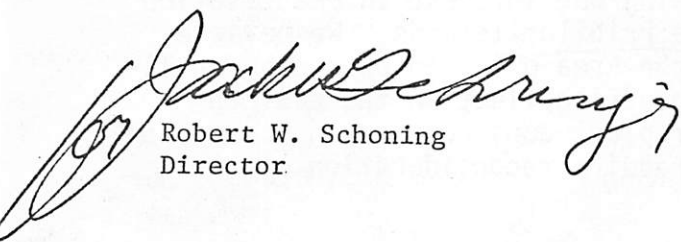


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utilized for such a contract. Perhaps as much as \$200,000 will be required. Should such funds be identified, we would proceed with the studies to hasten the development as much as possible.

We will work with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council on this. Should further questions arise, you may refer them to Harry L. Rietze, Director, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 1668, Juneau, Alaska 99802, whom I have asked to take the lead on dealing with the St. Paul Harbor study and development.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Schoning
Director

Enclosures (2)