

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

John Henderschedt, Acting Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director



605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501-2252

Telephone (907) 271-2809

Fax (907) 271-2817

Visit our website: <http://www.npfmc.org/>

August 12, 2014

Dr. Bruce Leaman, Executive Director
International Pacific Halibut Commission
2320 W. Commodore Way, Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98199-1287

Dear Dr. Leaman:

I am writing in response to IPHC Commissioner/Chair Paul Ryall's July 30 letter to (former) Chairman Eric Olson, requesting a joint meeting with the Council to ... "facilitate discussion and collaboration on potential bycatch reduction targets, management measures, and monitoring programs that fall under the Council's authority". As I understand the request, such a meeting would enable us to discuss the development of a coordinated (total) mortality management framework. Based on my discussions with Council leadership, we agree that such a meeting could provide a productive framework to better inform both management bodies relative to potential management actions under our respective authorities. We do believe, however, that it will be imperative to have a clear, mutual understanding of the context, expectations, and potential outcomes of such a joint meeting.

In that vein, and with respect to the timing of such a meeting, we understand that the Commission, during your September 2014 Commissioner's retreat, will be reviewing the revised 'total mortality accounting' approach being developed by Commission staff (and for which the Council received a preview at its June 2014 meeting). As is pointed out in Mr. Ryall's letter, this approach, which directly accounts for U26 bycatch mortality within the halibut yield calculations, may have significant implications for management actions by either the Council or the Commission. We believe that your meeting in September could allow for greater specificity with regard to framing a joint meeting of the Council and Commission, and we look forward to timely communication on your deliberations. This would also allow for the Council to discuss the parameters of such a joint meeting at its October 2014 Council meeting in Anchorage.

We also believe it would be most useful to see what actions the Commission may take at its January 2015 annual meeting with this new information, prior to holding a joint meeting. Finally, the Council is scheduled to review an analysis of proposed adjustments to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands halibut PSC limits at its February 2015 meeting. This action was initiated after the Commission's January 2014 motion concerning a meeting with the Council, and it could be informed by the results of the Commission's 'total mortality accounting' approach. We believe that having both bodies consider all of these moving pieces in their further stages of development will allow us the best opportunity to frame an appropriate and productive context for a joint meeting.

Based on the sequence of events described above, we suggest that the appropriate timing for a joint meeting (either the whole bodies of the Council and Commission, or some type of subcommittee), would be sometime in March of 2015. This timing would allow us to take full advantage of the information available, and would provide time for us to jointly frame the specific parameters of such a meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I appreciate the Commission's proposal for this meeting, and hope that you agree with my initial suggestions relative to the scope and timing of such a meeting. Please contact me if you have any questions in this regards. In the meantime, we will look forward to further correspondence from you regarding the outcomes of your September Commissioner's retreat.

Sincerely,



Chris Oliver
Executive Director