Subject: D3 - Pribilof Canyon corals

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Date: 12/2/2014 3:09 PM

To: "npfmc.comments@noaa.gov" <npfmc.comments@noaa.gov>

Chairman Dan Hull

Council Members

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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RE: D3 - Pribilof Canyon corals

Dear Chairman Hull and Council Members,

On behalf of Marine Conservation Institute I would like to submit the attached Scientists' Letter calling on President Obama to strongly protect at least 20% of each biogeographic province in US waters in no-take marine reserves. Despite the many significant and consequential efforts to manage fisheries, fishing's impacts on the ecosystem cannot be managed without reserves being one of the tools we use. The 600 marine scientist signers from around the world are encouraging us to protect at least 20% of coastal and marine ecosystems and at the recently concluded IUCN World Parks Congress, delegates called for protection of 30% of marine coastal habitats to be effectively managed in marine protected areas. Currently there are no marine reserves in Alaskan waters to help maintain and recover fisheries or provide safe havens for marine life. The NPFMC can take important steps to providing a lasting legacy for native Alaskans, fishing communities and marine life by protecting the Bering Sea Canyons.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this agenda item.

Sincerely,

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Marine Conservation Institute

Saving wild ocean places, for us and future generations



12/3/2014 10:39 AM



Dear President Obama,

Marine life and the essential ecological services oceans provide are increasingly threatened by human activities including climate change and ocean acidification. For several decades marine scientists have recognized the value of no-take marine reserves for safeguarding marine life. In 1998, Marine Conservation Institute and 1,605 marine scientists issued the "Troubled Waters: A Call for Action" statement (Appendix 1) calling on the world to protect 20% of every marine biogeographic region to save the sea's biodiversity. In 2001, the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis issued its "Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Reserves and Marine Protected Areas", outlining the striking ecological benefits for marine life within and outside of no-take reserves and the effects of ecological networks (Appendix 2).

An extensive scientific literature now shows compelling evidence that strongly protected marine reserves are powerful ways of conserving biodiversity. In addition, no-take reserves can create jobs and bring in new economic revenue through ecotourism and enhancement of local fisheries through spillover beyond reserve boundaries. Finally, no-take reserves provide resilience against the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification. Whereas the unprotected ocean is like a debit account where everybody withdraws and nobody deposits, marine reserves are like savings accounts that produce interest we can live off.

The United States and several states (most notably California) have designated many marine protected areas. Multiple-use areas designated to protect natural or cultural heritage now cover about 8% of U.S. waters. But notake reserves cover less than 3% of the approximately 4.4 million square mile U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. As a nation we need to do better.

Acknowledging this progress and the growing impacts that humans are having on our marine ecosystems and the fisheries they support, we, the undersigned scientists, call on the United States government to dramatically accelerate protections for U.S. waters. Protecting 20% of habitats across all biogeographic regions in no-take reserves will provide the resilience needed to ensure America's ongoing interest in healthy oceans.

Sincerely,

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