



SEP 13 1994



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1335 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairmen, Regional Fishery Management Councils
FROM: Rolland A. Schmitten *RS*
SUBJECT: Regional Fishery Management Council Chairmen's Meeting

I would like to thank all of you for the opportunity to participate in the Regional Fishery Management Council Chairmen's Meeting, conducted on May 15-16, 1994, in Washington D.C. We have examined each position taken by you on the various administrative issues that were raised at the meeting or in subsequent correspondence. This memorandum provides my decisions on the issues.

Issue I: Payments to Council Staff for Unused Sick/Annual Leave

Each Council may maintain two accounts for leave payment purposes, one to pay for unused sick leave to employees upon their retirement, or to their estates upon their death, and the other to pay for unused annual leave to employees upon separation. These accounts will be funded from the Councils' annual operating allowances. These accounts, including accrued interest, may be carried over from year-to-year. The mechanics of these accounts are to be worked out with the NMFS Budget and Planning Office and the NOAA Grants Office. Councils interested in setting up these accounts this fiscal year may do so immediately. We are initiating action to amend 50 CFR part 605 to conform to this decision. These accounts are to be used for deposits for the payment of unused annual and sick leave purposes only.

Issue II: Councils' Budgets

Contrary to our earlier expectations for the initial FY 1995 budgets, Councils have been level funded at the same rate as in FY 1994. Had an increase been provided, we had agreed to use the workload analysis to determine the allocations of any increase to the Councils. For FY 1996 and beyond, you have agreed to convene a committee to develop an alternative method of allocating Council funding. I look forward to reviewing your proposal.

Issue III: Standard Definitions

We will initiate action to amend 50 CFR part 620 to include "official" definitions for marine recreational fishermen/fishing, and therefore, commercial fishermen/fishing by default, for

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR FISHERIES



vessels-for-hire engaged in recreational fishing (VHERF), and for charterboats and headboats. The amendment will provide a window during which FMP definitions must be brought into compliance with these official definitions. We estimate that fewer than 6 existing FMPs throughout the EEZ would require an amendment of definitions related to marine recreational fishermen/fishing and/or charterboats and headboats. I would appreciate your projection of the earliest date by which your respective Council's affected FMP's would be brought into compliance.

Issue IV: Miscellaneous

The designation of a single grants management specialist for all Councils, and the payment of locality pay have been addressed in prior memos dated: June 14, June 22, and July 26, 1994. In addition, I am approving Council access to our electronic mail (E-mail) system, and have notified the Regional Directors to make arrangements as appropriate.

I want to thank everyone who participated in the Chairmen's meeting for their cooperative approach to problem solving. This meeting was an ideal forum to demonstrate how "good communication" can work.