



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
THE DIRECTOR

June 30, 2025

Angel Drobnica, Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
1007 West 3rd Ave., Suite 400
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Ms. Drobnica:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's June 10, 2025, motion concerning annual harvest specifications for the Cook Inlet salmon fishery. The motion reads as follows: "The Council does not intend to recommend harvest specifications for the 2026 Cook Inlet EEZ salmon fishery and requests that NMFS implement specifications under Secretarial authority."

Section 302(h) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) lists the mandatory functions of each Council, including the requirement that "Each Council shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Act... (6) develop annual catch limits for each of its managed fisheries that may not exceed the fishing level recommendations of its scientific and statistical committee..." The Council does not have authority to ignore a statutory requirement, nor to assign a statutory obligation to NMFS. The Council must undertake this important and fundamental duty: reviewing the best available scientific information and recommending catch limits under a Council Fishery Management Plan to prevent overfishing.

I am aware of the Council's limited resources and scheduling challenges. If the Council cannot accommodate this item on its regular agenda, I suggest scheduling one or more virtual meetings as needed to fulfill this basic requirement of the MSA.

Sincerely,

Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler

