

SEP 12 2013



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

Ms. Julie Bonney  
Executive Director  
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank, Inc.  
P.O. Box 788  
Kodiak AK 99615

Dear Ms. Bonney:

Thank you for your letter regarding the winter 2014 Gulf of Alaska pollock survey. We agree that this survey provides critical scientific data for managing the Gulf's pollock fishery and acknowledge how important it is that this survey be conducted. We have made it one of our highest priorities for NOAA survey funding, and are working closely with NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) to ensure this survey occurs.

In the 2010–2011 *Oscar Dyson* winter repair period, delays affected the winter Gulf pollock survey. We regret these delays and have set a high priority on *Oscar Dyson* mission readiness, as evidenced by the following:

- OMAO has hired a dedicated Port Engineer for *Oscar Dyson*, who has been effective in keeping the ship "mission ready" by completing repair periods on schedule, in addition to increasing the focus on preventative maintenance and system upgrades. OMAO is learning from other fisheries survey vessels as they have come on line.
- OMAO has a dry dock repair period scheduled for the *Oscar Dyson* this fall, which has been well planned and contains a 1-month post-dry-dock shakedown to ensure readiness for the Gulf winter pollock survey. The contract for this dry dock is planned for award in September, allowing the successful bidder almost 1 month of lead time to prepare for execution. This significantly reduces schedule risk, and is one of the strategies OMAO employs in their project management for ship repair.

We are working diligently to keep the 32-year time series intact and affirm the value of accurate scientific information for determining the annual catch limits so critical to Alaska's pollock processors, harvesters, and fishing-dependent communities. We are planning accordingly and sincerely appreciate your support for this survey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel D. Rutch III".

Samuel D. Rutch III  
Deputy Assistant Administrator  
for Regulatory Programs,  
performing the functions and duties of the  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

