

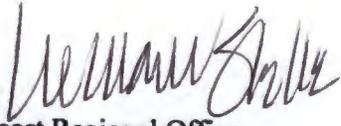


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service

March 18, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

FROM:

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National Marine Fisheries Service

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SUBJECT: Establishment of the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) pursuant to Magnuson Stevens Act § 302(g)(1)(E)

Section 302(g)(1)(E) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) provides that "The Secretary [of Commerce] and each Council may establish a peer review process for that Council for scientific information used to advise the Council about the conservation and management of the fishery." (16 U.S.C. § 1852(g)(1)(E)). The MSA National Standard 2 Guidelines provide guidance on the "best scientific information available" standard, including guidance on standards for establishing a peer review process per MSA section 302(g)(1)(E). The NS2 Guidelines also state that the Secretary will announce the establishment of a peer review process under MSA 302(g)(1)(E) in the Federal Register, along with a brief description of the process. This memorandum summarizes the decision by the Secretary of Commerce, through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) to establish the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) pursuant to MSA section 302(g)(1)(E).

The STAR is a regional scientific peer review process that has been jointly established pursuant to MSA section 302(g)(1)(E) by the NMFS and PFMC, and used to provide the best scientific information available for fishery conservation and management recommendations. The NMFS and PMFC have worked together to establish the STAR guidelines and ensure the STAR is in compliance with the NS2 Guidelines.

The Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers' Research and Science Directors held a conference call with the Executive and Deputy Directors of the Pacific Fishery Management Council on March 21, 2014. During this call, participants conferred the Pacific coast Stock Assessment Review (STAR) process is to be established as per MSA 302(f)(1)(E) and is compliant with NS2 Guidelines. The PFMC and West Coast Regional Office were provided with an opportunity to review the proposed Federal Register Notice (FRN) to announce the establishment of the STAR process as a peer review process under MSA 302(g)(1)(E), along with a brief description of the process. Subsequently, Science



**Center Directors received an email confirmation from Mr. Chuck Tracy, PFMC Deputy Director, on June 23, 2014, that there were no suggested edits to the FRN to announce the STAR as a 302(g)(1)(E) review process. Additionally, the Science Center Directors received an email from Mr. Bob Turner on July 1, 2014 conferring that the West Coast Region is in agreement with the proposed FRN including the description of how the STAR process complies with NS2 of the MSA.**