



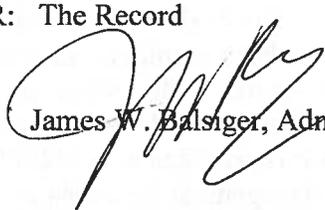
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

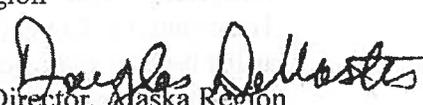
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June 25, 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

FROM:


James W. Balsiger, Administrator, Alaska Region


Douglas P. DeMaster, Science and Research Director, Alaska Region

SUBJECT:

Establishment of the North Pacific Stock Assessment Review Process
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) and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to establish the North Pacific Stock Assessment Review (NPSAR) process pursuant to MSA section 302(g)(1)(E).

Description of the Peer Review Process

The development of the NPSAR process described briefly below has evolved over the years and is currently in use.

The North Pacific Stock Assessment Review (NPSAR) process has been jointly established by the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), NMFS Alaska Regional Fisheries Office (AKRO), and North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to conduct the peer review of scientific information used for fishery management in the North Pacific region. The NPFMC’s SSC reviews all the main scientific analyses that come before the Council for action, including SAFE documents. The NPFMC’s SSC has a set of guidelines that it uses specifically when reviewing SAFE documents.

The AFSC is responsible for stock assessments for about 25 species or species groups listed in the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) for the Gulf of Alaska and



approximately 25 species or species groups in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish FMP. The State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) has responsibility for one groundfish stock assessment in the GOA FMP and all assessment responsibility for Scallops. The AFSC and ADFG share assessment responsibilities for the 10 species in the Bering Sea crab FMP. Scientific recommendations for these living marine resources are provided by the NPFMC with various management authorities delegated to the State of Alaska for crab and scallop fisheries. The SAFE report is compiled by the Plan Teams (which are scientific review bodies specific to each FMP) with contributions that include individual stock assessment, economic, and ecosystem chapters from AFSC and ADFG. The SAFE is disseminated by the NPFMC and describes the condition and current status of these resources in addition to information that summarizes the ecosystem and economic status. The stock assessment, economic, and ecosystem chapters are subject to agency internal review before dissemination to the FMP Plan Teams and the Council's SSC. The information is provided to the NPFMC and ADFG to be used as the basis of their management decisions. Management decisions by NPFMC are subsequently approved and disseminated by the NMFS. Management decisions by ADFG must be consistent with the specific management authorities delegated to the State of Alaska under the crab and scallop FMPs.

Agreement to Establish a Peer Review Process

The NPFMC and the NMFS Alaska Region and Alaska Fisheries Science Center have worked collaboratively over the years to develop and refine this MSA 302(g)(1)(E) compliant process. Recent efforts have been made to more fully describe and document this process as a result of the NS2 Guidelines revision. The confirmation of the peer review descriptions to be published in the FR and the more detailed description already on the NPFMC's web site (<http://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/resources/SAFE/AFSCsafeReviewProcess.pdf>) was conveyed in an email response from NPFMC Executive Director, Chris Oliver to us on June 25, 2014.

Cc: NPFMC - Chris Oliver
F/AKC2 - Pat Livingston
F/ST4 - William Michaels