



April 13, 2015

Ambassador David Balton  
US Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington DC 20520

Dear Ambassador Balton:

We are writing as a follow-up to the letter you received from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council dated March 9, 2015. Collectively, PSPA and APA represent a large component of the Alaska pollock and cod fisheries as well as companies involved with other species such as salmon and crab.

Our organizations were very much involved in the development of the Council's Arctic FMP. We were also involved in the passage of SJR 17 which called for the United States to negotiate an international agreement for the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO) that would compliment US management within our Exclusive Economic Zone. We are very supportive of your efforts to secure such an international agreement for the CAO.

As a result of these negotiations, there is a call by the Arctic coastal states for an international scientific research program to assess the living marine resources in the CAO, including fisheries. We support this initiative, but are concerned about how this will influence the fishery agreement and its provisions regarding scientific cooperation. We believe that the goal should be to develop institutional arrangements that are durable and provide consistency over time, that promote scientific cooperation and coordination, and are focused on the Arctic.

We have experience with such an institutional arrangement for the North Pacific Ocean through PICES, and recognize that a similar arrangement is in place for the North Atlantic through ICES. These two organizations may provide a model for scientific cooperation in the Arctic. In fact there are efforts underway to promote cooperation between PICES and ICES to address Arctic research needs. Unfortunately, we see this as an ad hoc approach that does not provide a long term solution. Both of these organizations cover vast ocean areas, and the Arctic is not a part of their core missions. We are concerned that involving ICES and PICES would dilute their ongoing work, tax already limited and dedicated resources, and not provide the focus we believe is necessary.

Instead, we would encourage the United States to pursue development of an Arctic "ICES" that is focused on the Central Arctic Ocean and adjacent waters. Like the organizations in place for the North Pacific and North Atlantic, this new "ICES" should be established by international

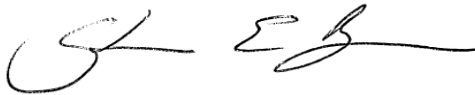
agreement with explicit commitments by governments to cooperate on Arctic marine research. A durable scientific organization, established by international agreement between governments, could foster scientific planning and cooperation, improve logistical coordination and the use of resources, and provide for a central repository for Arctic research information.

We would also point out that this scientific organization should be a standalone institution such as is the case with ICES and PICES. It would be inappropriate, for example, for it to be under the Arctic Council which does not have fisheries as part of its charge.

Again, we want to thank you for your efforts to secure an international fisheries agreement for the Central Arctic Ocean. If there is any way we can assist you in this effort please let us know.

Sincerely,

Pacific Seafood Processors Association

Handwritten signature of Glenn Reed in black ink.

Glenn Reed  
President

At-sea Processors Association

Handwritten signature of Stephanie D. Madsen in black ink.

Stephanie Madsen  
Executive Director

cc:

Senator Lisa Murkowski  
Senator Dan Sullivan  
Senator Patty Murray  
Senator Maria Cantwell  
Dan Hull, Chair NPFMC  
Kathleen Sullivan, NOAA Administrator