



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

September 11, 2024

Ms. Angel Drobnica
Chair, North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Ms. Drobnica:

Thank you for your letter highlighting the impacts of climate change in the North Pacific and your advocacy for the continuation of Alaska Fisheries Science Center's fisheries and ecosystem surveys. Monitoring fish and crab populations and marine ecosystems is critical to maintaining well-managed commercial fisheries, a robust domestic seafood supply, and a sustainable subsistence culture. We appreciate your support of these surveys and affirmation of NOAA's science-based management.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) strives to maintain a balanced research portfolio that both provides information needed for current management decisions and improves our understanding of complex population and ecosystem dynamics across the nation.

Due to increasing costs, the increasing complexity of NOAA's mission due to climate change and global economics, and an ever-present need to improve efficiency, we must develop and refine novel ways to collect, process, and analyze data. For example, for the bottom trawl survey modernization effort referenced in your letter, multiple surveys are being combined into a single comprehensive survey design. The reduction in survey days for both the acoustics and bottom trawl surveys is expected to result in lower-resolution sampling and increased uncertainty. While the uncertainty impacts to assessments are stock-specific and dependent on Council decisions, we will provide data for the full suite of stock assessments and environmental monitoring.

Our planning for 2025 surveys will continue to be refined as we learn more about the resources we will have available. NOAA is committed to maintaining survey data collections as our top science priority to manage Alaska fisheries in the short term and to sustain fisheries, protected resources, and marine ecosystems in the long term. These are challenging times that require increased cooperation, coordination, and partnership. I look forward to maintaining ties to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and to working together to address mutual challenges and achieving our shared stewardship mission.

If you have any questions, please contact Alaska Fisheries Science Center Director Robert Foy at Robert.Foy@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator
for Fisheries

