



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

April 14, 2005

Mr. Daniel Basta
Director
National Marine Sanctuary Program
National Ocean Service
1305 East West Highway, SSMC-4
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Dan:

Please find enclosed the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's (Council) recommendation regarding fishing regulations for the proposed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) National Marine Sanctuary. As required under Section 304(a)(5) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA), the enclosed document includes proposed regulations that are consistent with the NMSA and the proposed goals and objectives for the NWHI sanctuary, as well as a summary of how these regulations meet the consistency criteria and other supporting documentation.

We appreciate your granting the Council's requests for extensions to the 120-day limit for the preparation of this recommendation. Although the Council would have preferred to have had access to a draft Environmental Impact Statement as required under the National Environmental Policy Act prior to making this recommendation, the extensions did allow for a limited review of the scientific and legal issues surrounding the proposed sanctuary. In addition, the extensions allowed the Council to hold a series of public meetings that provided important comments from potentially affected stakeholders and the general public.

Sincerely,

for Kitty M. Morioaka
Roy Morioaka
Council Chair

cc: Council members
Admiral Lautenbacher, NOAA Administrator
Rick Spinrad, NOS Assistant Administrator
Bill Hogarth, NMFS Assistant Administrator
Rebecca Lent, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs
Aulani Wilhelm, Acting Reserve Coordinator
Hawaii Congressional Delegation
Regional Fishery Management Councils