

Martin Re-elected Chair of Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

HONOLULU (15 October 2007) At the close of its four-day meeting in Honolulu on Friday, the Western Pacific Regional Management Council re-elected Sean Martin, co-owner of Pacific Ocean Producers, as its chair. The Council is the federal agency responsible for managing fisheries in the offshore waters surrounding Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and other US Pacific islands. It is comprised of eight members nominated by their respective governors and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and eight designated members representing State, Territorial and Federal agencies. Decisions made by the Council are forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for approval. Martin is the only commercial fisherman on the Council.

Manuel Duenas, president of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative, was re-elected as vice chair from Guam. Newly elected vice chairs include businessman Stephen Haleck from American Samoa; resort and hotel consultant/recreational fisherman Fred Duerr from Hawaii; and cultural practitioner Benigno Sablan from CNMI. The Council also appointed Marlowe Sabater, biologist with the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, as a member of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee. The Committee reviews issues brought before the Council and provides recommendations based on the best available science, as mandated by law.

The Council also accepted the following persons to its Recreational Task Force. They include recreational and charter-boat fishermen, a government representative, a scientist, radio broadcasters and a small boat advocate:

- From Guam: Jesse Rosario and James Borja
- From CNMI: Ray Roberto
- From Hawaii: Andrew West (Kona), Jeff Rogers (Kona), Kent Mongrieg (Kona), Mike Sakamoto (Hilo), Mike Buck (Oahu), Bill Mossman (Oahu) and Roy Morioka (Oahu)

Representatives from American Samoa and the Hawaiian islands of Lanai, Molokai, Maui and Kauai are forthcoming.

Noting that fisheries in the US Pacific islands fisheries can not always be clearly defined as either recreational or commercial, the Council directed its staff review the definition of "artisanal fisheries" for the appropriateness of use by the Council for Western Pacific Region fisheries and situations.

It was announced that the first meeting of the US advisory committee for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) will convene Nov. 1, 2007, in Honolulu. The WCPFC is a multi-national regional fishery management organization responsible for managing tuna and other highly migratory species in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. It has set national quotas for bigeye tuna and has introduced effort limits for purse seiners to conserve yellowfin tuna. The Commission is scheduled to hold its fourth regular meeting in Guam from Dec. 3 to 7, 2007.

For more information, contact the Council at www.wpcouncil.org, info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or 808 522-8220.