

**Western  
Pacific  
Regional  
Fishery  
Management  
Council**

6.D(2)  
167th CM

February 28, 2019

Ms. Suzanne Case, Chairperson  
Department of Land and Natural Resources  
Kalanimoku Building, 1151 Punchbowl Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Ms. Case:

Re: BLNR Decision on Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) congratulates the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) on its January 11, 2019, decision to open four Bottomfish Restricted Fishing Areas (BRFAs) but is extremely disappointed that some of the BRRAs remain closed. We understand that the BLNR members could not consider this option at the January meeting because that was not the proposal before them. We ask that immediate action be taken to place removal of the remaining BRFAs on the next BLNR agenda.

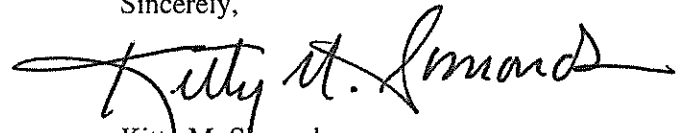
At the January meeting, the Board members appeared to lack a clear understanding of the MHI bottomfish fishery, including its health, management and economic importance. The Hawaii members of the Council who were appointed by the Secretary of Commerce believe that a presentation to the Board is needed. We, therefore, request that you invite the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to provide this presentation at the earliest opportunity available.

The Council understands that the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) staff is in the process of developing changes to the bottomfish reporting system to account for the opening of the four BRFAs. Please ask your staff to include the NMFS and Council staffs in this effort as changes will affect the federal noncommercial bottomfish reporting system. The state and federal systems must be consistent in this fishery.

Finally, we recommend that the Bottomfish Working Group (members include DAR, NMFS, the Council, University of Hawaii researchers and the fishing community) continue to assist the State, the Council and NMFS on any management changes to this fishery. Since 2007, this group has reviewed the management regime and made recommendations to the State, the Council and the NMFS to improve management of the fishery and coordinate implementation of the fishery's annual catch limits and monitoring program.

Please have your office contact Mark Mitsuyasu at the Council office about these matters. He may be reached at [mark.mitsuyasu@wpcouncil.org](mailto:mark.mitsuyasu@wpcouncil.org) or at (808) 522-8223.

Sincerely,



Kitty M. Simonds  
Executive Director

cc: BLNR members  
Hawaii Appointed Council Members  
Mike Tosatto, regional administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office  
Michael Seki, director, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center