



June 21, 2023

Dear Council Members and Staff,

I have a few quick updates for you below. I also plan to join virtually to deliver remarks on June 27.

BBNJ

An intergovernmental conference (IGC) at the United Nations successfully concluded negotiations on a new agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of “marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction” (BBNJ) on March 4, 2023. The Agreement is designed as an implementing agreement under the Law of the Sea Convention (the Convention) and covers four main topics: area-based management tools, including marine protected areas; marine genetic resources, including sharing of benefits; environmental impact assessments; and capacity building and the transfer of marine technology. The IGC reconvened June 19 to formally adopt the text in all six official UN languages. I am attaching a summary of the final text for your information.

South Pacific Tuna Treaty

State is working on securing legal authority to sign the recently concluded new Economic Assistance Agreement to replace the one that is expiring this year. The new EAA, agreed in draft form in April, will span another ten-year period but include an increase to \$60m per year as announced at the Pacific Islands Forum last year. Talks on amendments to Annex II of the Treaty with regard to terms for 2024 and beyond are ongoing, with drafting group sessions occurring throughout June and another negotiating session planned for mid-July.

The UN Fish Stocks Resumed Review Conference

At the Resumed Review Conference in late March the U.S. delegation advanced and successfully secured stronger language on high seas boarding and inspection, recommending adding responsible fishing operations to RFMO mandates to address forced labor, as well as language recommending modernizing RFMOs, recognizing the value of the bottom fishing review, developing new, strong text to protect sea birds, and supporting information sharing to combat IUU fishing, including through the global

record and PSMA global information exchange system. The U.S. delegation, along with other likeminded delegations, advocated for stronger language on climate change, recognition of the commitment to global 30x30, and welcoming the conclusion of the BBNJ negotiations, however they could not ultimately garner consensus in the room. None-the-less the recommendations outline key actions to continue to advance the implementation of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. The Review Conference, also held in 2006, 2010, and 2016, will take place again no earlier than 2028.

Commissioner Appointments

Roger Dang's Presidential appointment recommendation for WCPFC is with the White House for review. We are now working on an alternate designation for him while we await action by the WH. Archie Soliai's SPRFMO package is in the OES bureau front office pending action to send it up to the Secretary for transmittal to the WH.

Sincerely,

C. Colin Brinkman
Office of Marine Conservation