

APR - 2 2015



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

Keith Rizzardi, JD  
Chair, Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee  
St. Thomas University School of Law  
Environmental Sustainability LLM Program  
16401 NW 37th Avenue  
Miami Gardens, FL 33054

Dear Mr. Rizzardi:

For several years, NOAA Fisheries has carried out cooperative management and cooperative research under several statutes. A diverse group of environmental non-governmental organization, fishing industry, and academic stakeholders sent a letter to Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, NOAA Administrator, in November 2013 requesting that NOAA strengthen the use of co-management in fisheries management. In response, the NOAA Fisheries Leadership Council requested a review of the agency's co-management and cooperative research activities undertaken pursuant to NOAA Fisheries' major statutes (e.g., Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Magnuson-Stevens Act).

A NOAA Fisheries working group conducted this review and also interviewed 50 NOAA Fisheries staff and nine external stakeholders about the successes and challenges of these existing activities. The enclosed draft white paper provides an overview of those activities to date and provides recommendations to the NOAA Fisheries Leadership Council on how to move forward.

As noted in the white paper, one of the key attributes of cooperative research and cooperative management is to be as open and transparent as possible with our partners. With that goal in mind, I would like the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee to review the white paper and provide comments on the recommendations only (beginning on page 40). Please send your comments to Heather Sagar at [heather.sagar@noaa.gov](mailto:heather.sagar@noaa.gov) by June 26, 2015.

If you have any further questions, please contact Heather Sagar, Senior Policy Advisor, at (301) 427-8019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eileen Sobeck".

Eileen Sobeck

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR  
FOR FISHERIES

