

January 25, 2017

The Honorable Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States of America
c/o Trump-Pence Transition Team
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.
Secretary of Commerce Nominee
c/o Trump-Pence Transition Team
Washington, D.C.

**Re: Commerce Department Appointee Recommendation;
Chris Oliver for NOAA Fisheries
Letter of Support Signed by 54 Fishing Organizations from Across America**

Dear Mr. Vice President and Mr. Ross:

We are participants in America's marine fisheries and we strongly support appointing Chris Oliver as the next Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries.

Commercial and recreational fishing in federally managed waters makes a significant economic contribution to the United States, generating more than \$214 billion in sales and supporting 1.83 million jobs.¹ However, the industry faces tremendous pressure from international competition—90 percent of seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported, and our country has a \$13.2 billion seafood trade deficit (mostly from China).²

We need a leader of NOAA Fisheries who is committed to the economic productivity of American waters, and we are confident that Mr. Oliver is the right choice. Here are some of the reasons why:

1. Chris Oliver has nearly three decades of experience promoting economic prosperity in our nation's largest and most productive fishery in the waters off Alaska: Mr. Oliver has spent 26 years working with the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council—including 16 years as its Executive Director. Under his leadership the NPFMC has balanced competing interests among communities, fishing sectors and environmentalists to become the most sustainably managed and productive fishery in the world, accounting for more than half of all seafood

¹ NOAA (May 26, 2016), *Commercial and recreational saltwater fishing generated \$214 billion in 2014*, available at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/2016/05_May/26_05_feus_2014_pr.html

² See NMFS Fisheries of the United States (2015), available at: <https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/commercial-fisheries/fus/fus15/index>

landed in the U.S. and approximately two-thirds of America's seafood exports. In addition, Alaska maintains some of the most sought after recreational fishery opportunities anywhere.

2. Chris Oliver understands the complex regulatory framework of U.S. fisheries: Mr. Oliver is a leader on the Council Coordination Committee and has worked closely with all eight regional councils that manage America's fisheries. Among his many accomplishments at the CCC, Mr. Oliver helped find common ground across all regions to effectively push back against dubious NOAA policy initiatives and fisheries regulations that needlessly restricted the ability of the fishing industry to operate efficiently.
3. Chris Oliver supports easing regulatory burdens: In addition to promoting best conservation practices for long-term sustainable outcomes, Mr. Oliver has consistently advocated for streamlining the rule-making process in order to make fisheries management more sensible and responsive to real-time operations. For example, he worked with the CCC and NOAA Fisheries to integrate NEPA requirements into the MSA process to avoid duplicative and time consuming regulatory burdens.
4. Chris Oliver supports decentralized fisheries management: Mr. Oliver has consistently advocated for redistributing resources and authority from NOAA Fisheries headquarters to the NMFS regional offices and to the eight regional councils. Each region is faced with different challenges and fisheries management is not a one-size-fits-all scenario. Given the wide variability in our fisheries, flexibility must be an essential and key operating principle. Mr. Oliver will refocus the agency on its core science and management missions, and emphasize reliance on regional expertise to solve regional issues.
5. Chris Oliver understands international fisheries: Mr. Oliver has served as a delegate to the U.S./Russia Intergovernmental Consultative Committee for nearly 20 years, and helped develop bilateral agreements on the international boundary line as well as cooperative research and high-seas enforcement agreements key to the Bering Sea fisheries.
6. Chris Oliver will balance commercial and recreational fishing interests: One of his key accomplishments on the NPFMC was the creation of a management program that balanced the needs of both commercial and guided sport halibut fishermen in an effective and fair manner. Mr. Oliver is himself an avid sport fisherman, and is originally from Texas where he became very knowledgeable about both commercial and recreational fishing issues in the Gulf of Mexico.

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For these reasons, we strongly support Chris Oliver's appointment as the next Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries. Thank you for your consideration of his candidacy.

Sincerely,



Daniel Occhipinti
General Counsel



NATIONAL
FISHERIES
INSTITUTE

John Connelly
President



Lori Swanson
Executive Director



Greg DiDomenico
Executive Director



ORGANIZED
FISHERMEN
OF FLORIDA

Jerry Sansom
Executive Director



Bonnie Brady
Executive Director



Bob Jones
Executive Director



Roger Thomas
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Don Hansen
Founder



Angie Pinsonneault
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Eric Brazer
Deputy Director



Capt. Bill Kelly
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Tyson Fick,
Executive Director



Julie Bonney
Executive Director



Robert J. Wurm
President/CEO



Shannon Carroll
Fisheries Policy Director



Rebecca Skinner
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Craig Cross
Director of Government Affairs



Kathy Fosmark
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American Albacore Fishing
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Rob Rogness
VP Corporate Relations



At Sea Processors Association



Norm Van Vactor
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