March 1, 2017

Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230
Via email:  docexecsec@doc.gov

RE: Support for appointment of Chris Oliver for NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator

Dear Secretary Ross,

Congratulations on your confirmation as U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association in Alaska, representing 34 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off its coast.

UFA supports the appointment of Chris Oliver for appointment as the next Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries. We join a wide range of individuals and organizations involved in commercial fishing in Alaska, the West Coast and across the country that are wholeheartedly recommending Mr. Oliver for this important post. Mr. Oliver’s decades of experience, including 16 years as Executive Director of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, have proven his leadership capability, ability to understand the many issues that face commercial fisheries and the importance of our industry to our coastal communities. We stand with the 54 organizations that signed onto a letter of January 25, 2017 to Vice President-elect Pence and yourself (attached) supporting Mr. Oliver’s appointment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jerry McCune      Mark Vinsel
President      Executive Administrator

Attachment

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS
Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Independent Tendersmen’s Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association • Alaska Scallop Association
Alaska Trollers Association • Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Fishermen’s Association
Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas, Inc. • Concerned Area “M” Fishermen • Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United
Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Freezer Longline Coalition • Golden King Crab Coalition • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association
Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance • Southeast Alaska Fisherman’s Alliance
Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
United Cook Inlet Drift Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association
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

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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.
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

John Connelly
President

Lori Swanson
Executive Director

Greg DiDomenico
Executive Director

Jerry Sansom
Executive Director

Bonnie Brady
Executive Director

Bob Jones
Executive Director

Roger Thomas
President

Don Hansen
Founder

Angie Pinsonneault
Director of Business Dev.

Eric Brazer
Deputy Director

Capt. Bill Kelly
Executive Director
Tyson Fick, Executive Director

Julie Bonney, Executive Director

Robert J. Wurm, President/CEO

Shannon Carroll, Fisheries Policy Director

Rebecca Skinner, Executive Director

Craig Cross, Director of Government Affairs

Kathy Fosmark, Executive Director

Natalie Webster, Director of Operations

Rob Rogness, VP Corporate Relations

Stephanie Madsen, Executive Director

Norm Van Vactor, President/CEO

Joe Reilly, President

At Sea Processors Association

American Albacore Fishing Association

American Seafoods Company

APA

Providing Opportunities

BBEDC

California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains, Incorporated
Kris Norosz  
Government Affairs

Heather Mann  
Executive Director

Ian Tolleson  
Director of Gov. Affairs

Jason Brandt  
President & CEO

Brad Pettinger  
Executive Director

Glenn Reed  
Executive Director

Dan Waldeck  
Executive Director

Nils E. Stolpe  
Executive Director

Southern Offshore Fishing Association

Seafood Coalition

Joe Hamby  
Chief Operating Officer

Stefanie Moreland,  
VP Government Affairs

Frank Kelty  
Mayor