



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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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
President

Mark Vinsel
Executive Administrator

Attachment

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Independent Tendermen'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

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
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



American Albacore Fishing
Association



Rob Rogness
VP Corporate Relations



At Sea Processors Association



Norm Van Vactor
President/CEO



Joe Reilly
President



Rob Ross
Executive Director



Chris Voss
President



David Goldenberg
Executive Director



Diane Pleschner-Steele
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James Haussener
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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

Seafood Coalition

Nils E. Stolpe
Executive Director

Southern Offshore Fishing Association

Robert Spaeth
Executive Director



Joe Hamby
Chief Operating Officer



Stefanie Moreland,
VP Government Affairs



Frank Kelty
Mayor



Washington Trollers Association

Greg Mueller
President



Brent Paine
Executive Director



Lori Steele
Executive Director



United Fishermen's Marketing Assoc.

Jeff Stephen
Executive Director



Jonathan Gonzales
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Mike Conroy
President