



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
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MAR 27 2019

Ms. Janice Castro
Director
Division of Coastal Resources Management
CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
P.O. Box 501304
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Ms. Castro:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will propose a 2019 limit of 2,000 metric tons (t) of longline-caught bigeye tuna for each U.S. Pacific territory (American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or CNMI). NMFS would allow each territory to allocate up to 1,000 t of the 2,000 t each year to U.S. longline fishing vessels in a specified fishing agreement that meets established criteria. As accountability measures, NMFS would monitor, attribute, and restrict (if necessary) catches of longline-caught bigeye tuna, including catches made under a specified fishing agreement. The limits support the long-term sustainability of fishery resources of the U.S. Pacific Islands.

The proposed catch limits and accountability measures are identical to those that NMFS specified in 2016-2018 for CNMI longline fisheries. On April 17, 2018, your office acknowledged that the action is fully within the scope of your 2016 concurrence, which indicated that the action would be conducted in a manner that complies with the CNMI Coastal Resources Management Program, and is consistent with that program.

Pursuant to section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (33 U.S.C. 1456(c)(1)(C)), I have determined that the proposed 2019 action is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved Coastal Zone Management Program of the CNMI. I request your review of, and concurrence with, this determination. Under regulations at 15 CFR 930.41(a), we may presume your concurrence if we do not receive your response within 60 days from receipt of this consistency determination. Because this is a time-sensitive action, however, we request your earliest response to this letter.

I have enclosed a draft environmental assessment (prepared by the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council) for 2019-2023 territorial bigeye tuna catch and allocation limits that provides information and analyses supporting this consistency determination. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Rebecca Walker at 808-725-5184 or rebecca.walker@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Tosatto
Regional Administrator

Encl.

