

JUN 19 2006



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms. Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director
Western Pacific Regional Fishery
Management Council
1164 Bishop Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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WESPAC

Dear Ms. Simonds:

Thank you for your letter regarding Super Typhoon Pongsona and the status of the Governors' requests for federal assistance to Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), under the terms of Section 312 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, and other Acts of Congress.

On April 11, 2003, the Secretary of Commerce responded to the March 1, 2003, letter from CNMI Governor Juan N. Babauta, and on April 18, 2003, the Secretary responded to the March 17, 2003, letter from Guam Governor Felix P. Camacho. The responses stated the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, and that NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would advise the Governors of a determination under these statutes. Copies of these responses are enclosed for your information.

There appears to have been an inordinate delay in the follow-up to these responses, for which I apologize. I have asked the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Administrator to complete an immediate review of all relevant data and make a determination as soon as possible. Subsequently, I will make a timely determination regarding whether a commercial fishery failure determination due to a fishery resource disaster can be supported at this time for this situation. To date no relief funds associated with Super Typhoon Pongsona have been appropriated by Congress.

Please be assured that NMFS is working to ensure such requests are addressed in a more timely manner in the future. I will advise you if any further information or actions are needed. I appreciate your commitment to the efforts under way to address this situation, and will immediately communicate the findings of the Pacific Islands Regional Office once a determination has been made.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Hogarth".

for William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.

Enclosures

