

July 13, 2005

Lisa Desfosse
National Observer Program
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Hwy, SSMC-3 RM 12362
Silver Spring, MD 20910

P.O. Box 30167
Seattle, WA 98103

Dear Ms. Desfosse:

This letter is in response to the email I received from you on July 2, 2005 and accompanies the submission of our final report under Contract # NFFKS100-2-00023 between the National Observer Program (NOP) and the Association for Professional Observers (APO). The July 2, 2005 communication contained requested revisions of the May 23, 2005 version of the report from the National Observer Program Advisory Team (NOPAT). I have done my best to incorporate as many of these as possible. However, I feel that the APO cannot be held responsible for the substantive changes (i.e., removal of all recommendations) that are being requested. I realize you are new to the NOP and may not have been fully informed regarding the process and multiple iterations over many years that have already taken place. I would like to provide our perspective regarding why we chose to not make the substantive changes the NOPAT has requested.

The APO was contracted by NOP in June of 2002 to provide a summary report on recruitment and retention practices employed by federal observer programs **and** identify methods to improve recruitment and increase retention. Tracey Mayhew was subcontracted by the APO to complete this contract and was the primary author and contact for the first draft that was submitted on July 12, 2004. Ms. Mayhew subsequently accepted a position with the labor union representing observers in the North Pacific and did not participate substantially in the revisions requested.

On September 8, 2004, the NOP forwarded comments provided by the NOPAT, the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program and the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program. I submitted a draft to NOP staff on April 22, 2005 that incorporated these comments through sections 4.1B.

On May 23, 2005, the APO submitted another draft and also agreed to a final timeline for completion. At that time none of these substantial changes were identified. Furthermore, I was encouraged by NOP staff, Dennis Hansford and Teresa Turk, to continue working on the report and that I was heading in the right direction. The sudden change in the message that I have received regarding this product make me question why the agency pursued the contract for this information in the first place.

In retrospect, the APO was the wrong type of organization to perform this work and the SOW was poorly drafted; however, we have attempted to accommodate additional requests and incorporate NOPATs suggestions throughout this process.

If the NOP does not accept our inclusion of methods to improve recruitment and recommendations as clearly stated in the SOW objectives, the APO respectfully requests that the APO and the individual authors be removed from the final product, if one is pursued. You have our permission to utilize whatever elements from the document you feel are useful without crediting our organization.

Sincerely,

Kimberly S. Dietrich
Board Member and Treasurer

cc: Dr. Steve Murawski (letter via email)
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith (letter via email)
Vicki Cornish (letter via email)
Tracey Mayhew (letter via email)