

October 25, 2001

Vicki Cornish
National Observer Program
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910



Dear Ms. Cornish:

P.O. Box 30167
Seattle, WA 98103

The Association for Professional Observers (APO) was extremely pleased when we received a copy of the Management Control Review (MCR) on NMFS Observer Programs and Service Delivery Models just over one year ago. It is our understanding that many of the recommendations have been accomplished (i.e., deadlines are now past) and we greatly appreciate the work that has been done to date. The APO is writing each program requesting a progress report on actions to date. Ideally, the progress report would include a list of all recommendations, the actions taken to date to achieve each recommendation and future plans for action on recommendations not yet addressed.

From the National Observer Program (NOP) we are particularly interested in the status of any proposed changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Management and Conservation Act which may facilitate alternative funding sources for observer programs (especially in Alaska) and the agency's definition of "reasonable and fair" as it relates to funding observer programs nationwide (MCR, p.257).

The APO fully supports the recommendations in the MCR and would like to see full implementation as soon as possible. One of the APO's goals is to improve communication between observers and the agency. Observers play an integral role in the management of our nation's fisheries. The APO supports the retention of a corps of professional observers who understand the importance of the data they collect and the importance of their interface with the fishing industry. We strive to achieve these goals by providing information to observers in three ways: via our bi-weekly electronic news summary, through our quarterly newsletter and by having information available to observers on our website. We will post any progress reports on our website so observers have easy access.

Thank you for providing any information on the status of MCR recommendations.

Sincerely,

Kimberly S. Dietrich
Executive Officer

Cc: Dr. William T. Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries