



Date: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011  
Ref: 82022-NP and 82022-SP

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**By email** - cc Paul Knapman, Andy Hough

Dear Maylynn,

**American Albacore Fishing Association Pacific albacore tuna- north (82022-NP)**  
**American Albacore Fishing Association Pacific albacore tuna- south (82022-SP)**

The American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA) Pacific albacore tuna- north and south fisheries were both certified as sustainable on the 23rd August 2007. Site visits for the first, second and third annual surveillance audits for these fisheries subsequently took place between June and early August each year, but we have previously been informed by the US National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that scheduling a site visit over the summer is very difficult for the officials and scientists who provide management and scientific input to the meetings. The issue has been that the summer period is the main albacore fishing and scientific fieldwork season, and it has therefore been difficult or impossible to obtain input from the specialists who are best placed to inform the assessment process. Now, we have obtained correspondence from Mark Helvey, the Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Southwest Region, confirming that NMFS sees the last two weeks of October as being "a more suitable timeframe" for this year's annual surveillance audit meetings.

AAFA has also informed Intertek-Moody Marine that they would like to proceed with reassessment of the Pacific albacore tuna north and south fisheries. As is standard practice, we would seek to combine the reassessment site visit with this year's fourth annual surveillance audit visit in order to minimise the burden on NMFS, other stakeholders and the client.

We note that an end of October site visit would result in a delay occurring to the audit schedule for the AAFA fisheries. In addition, a reassessment site visit at that time would likely result in a gap occurring between the end of the existing certificates and the start of the new ones, should either or both fisheries again be assessed as meeting the MSC standard. However, we cannot see how else to proceed when NMFS has expressed a preference for the meetings to be held later in the year. We would therefore like to request a variation to the audit schedule for the AAFA Pacific albacore tuna north and south fisheries. Assuming that there were no unforeseen complications, we anticipate that a

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site visit held at the end of October would allow the fourth surveillance audit reports to be submitted to the MSC by the end of November 2011, resulting in a delay to the existing schedule of approximately 3 months. It is probably worth highlighting at this time that we have received no information to suggest that the AAFA fisheries are failing to perform at or above the required standard.

With regard to reassessment of the AAFA fisheries, we would of course work to proceed through the process as quickly as possible. However, we may need to write in due course to formally request an extension of the existing certificates if it became apparent that we would not be able to meet the deadline for recertification of August 2012.

I trust that my explanation of the need for a delay to the audit schedule is clear, and hope that you consider the justification to be acceptable. Please, though, feel free to contact me or Paul Knapman if you or your colleagues have any questions.

With thanks and best wishes,

*Rob*

Dr. Rob Blyth-Skyrme  
Intertek-Moody Marine Associate Auditor