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**Sent by email**

Date: 03/04/2019

**Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.3 GCR-7.5.6 for US West Coast limited entry groundfish trawl**

Dear Amanda Stern-Pirlot,

I write with reference to your submission on 27/03/2019 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

The validity of the fishery certificate to be extended to July 9, 2019, five weeks after its current expiration date.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.3 GCR-7.5.6 state:

The CAB shall issue fishery certificates with a maximum validity period of 5 years from the issue date

These are integral to ensuring all MSC accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies operate in a consistent and transparent manner. The MSC intends that these requirements be met across all fisheries and CoC certificate holders, except in exceptional, well-justified circumstances, as part of the MSC programme.

**MSC notes the factors presented supporting your request, including:**

- The US West Coast limited entry groundfish trawl is currently in its first reassessment cycle (seeking 2nd certificate) with several new stocks seeking certification for the first time. The assessment process has taken longer than anticipated due to several factors, including inherent complexity, and ASI review and ensuing response and handling.
- As compensation, if the current reassessment process is successful, the new fishery certificate will have a validity extending to June 1, 2024 – i.e. 5 years from the expiry of the current certificate before extension if the current process concludes in July.

**Given the rationale provided, the MSC is willing to grant a variation to the CR in this case subject to the following conditions:**

- The CAB can confirm that it is not aware at this time of any factor (related to either fishery status, or performance against conditions) that could result in the fishery no longer being in compliance with the MSC Fisheries Standard.
- Stakeholders are informed.
- ECert is updated to reflect changes, including providing a certificate covering the period from the end of the current certificate to the date accepted in the variation response.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Fisheries Assessment Manager for this fishery.

Marine Stewardship Council  
cc: Accreditation Services International