

Primary/Alternate

**At-Large Marin/Sonoma**

Dominique Richard/George Clyde

**At-Large San Francisco/San Mateo**

Kellyx Nelson/Christy Walker

**At-Large Sonoma/Mendocino**

Cea Higgins/Nancy Trissel

**California Resources Agency**

Deborah Halberstadt/Jennifer Phillips

**Conservation**

Richard Charter/Francesca Koe

**Conservation**

Bruce Bowser

**Education**

Elizabeth Babcock/Bibit Traut

**Maritime Activities/Commercial**

Barbara Emley/John Berge

**Maritime Activities/Recreational**

Joshua Russo/Abby Mohan

**National Park Service**

Cicely Muldoon/Sarah Allen

**Research**

John Largier/Jaime Jahncke

**United States Coast Guard**

LCDR Jason Brand/Kip Hutchinson

**US Fish and Wildlife Service**

Chris Barr/Gerry McChesney

**Youth**

Sandra Chu/Summer Alinaeem

National Marine Sanctuary Reps

**Channel Islands**

Chris Mobley/Mike Murray

**Cordell Bank**

Dan Howard/Michael Carver

**Monterey Bay**

Paul Michel/Dawn Hayes

Officers

**Chair**

John Largier

**Vice Chair**

Dominique Richard

**Secretary**

Barbara Emley

# Sanctuary Advisory Council

## GREATER FARALLONES NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Maria Brown

Sanctuary Superintendent

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

Dear Maria Brown,

The Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (GFNMS/SAC) has expressed their support for additional exploratory cruises necessary to more accurately delineate and characterize deep sea coral and sponge habitat in the expansion portion of our Sanctuary, particularly in the vicinity of the Point Arena Biogenic Area South (PABAS), an area that has recently been proposed to be opened for bottom trawling.

Since the revisiting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) process, a number of areas, including the Point Arena Biogenic Area South (PABAS), have been subject to PFMC review. The Greater Farallones Sanctuary Advisory Council is interested in acquiring more information regarding the geographic extent and nature of sensitive seafloor habitats susceptible to injury from bottom contact fishing gear and from ocean acidification associated with climate change impacts.

Consistent with the priorities of the GFNMS Sanctuary Management Plan, the GFNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council believes that further targeted exploration of relevant benthic habitats, involving multibeam mapping, substrate characterization and mapping, ROV and AUV cruises, low-impact acoustic surveys used in conjunction with video modeling and groundtruthing of rocky substrates in areas of potential fragile deep-sea corals - combined with additional detailed analysis of existing data from past cruises - will inevitably benefit future PFMC decisions. It will also enable the GFNMS/SAC to duly participate in making informed recommendations on the full range of present and future proposed groundfish EFH management measures.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

John Largier, Chair

Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council