UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

JAN 29 2016

Elizabeth Behl, Director
Health and Ecological Criteria Division, 4304-T
Office of Science and Technology, Office of Water
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Attention Docket No. EPA-HQ-OW-2015-0753

Dear Ms. Behl:

RE: Comments on the Environmental Protection Agency's Draft Recommended Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Cadmium-2015

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) appreciates the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the opportunity to submit the following technical comments in response to EPA's request for scientific views pertaining to the "Draft Recommended Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Cadmium-2015" (Federal Register 80(230):75097-75099; December 1, 2015). In recent years Our West Coast Regional Office completed formal Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultations on EPA's approval of water quality criteria, including criteria for cadmium, proposed by Oregon and Idaho. The outcome of these formal consultations include signed biological opinions relaying recommendations and concerns regarding the derivation of water quality criteria that are protective of ESA-listed species. NMFS is including portions of these biological opinions with our comments because the recommendations and concerns apply to EPA's draft recommended cadmium criteria currently under review.

NMFS is aware of the challenges associated with deriving water quality criteria for marine life and ESA-listed species when data availability is limited. We appreciate the interest EPA has expressed in in working with us on these challenges. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss our comments and work together on resolution of the issues we raise. If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 427-8495 or by e-mail at cathy.tortorici@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

Cathryn E. Tortorici
Chief, ESA Interagency Cooperation Division
Office of Protected Resources

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