

SEP 27 2010



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Robert L. Sumwalt
Member
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20594

Dear Mr. Sumwalt:

Thank you for your letter inviting NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to participate in the public forum on fishing vessel safety. I share your interest in improving human safety in fishing operations, a subject that NMFS addresses in all our fishery management plans pursuant to National Standard 10 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

I have asked Galen Tromble, Chief of the Domestic Fisheries Division, NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries, to attend the public forum and give a presentation on the above programs. As you requested, we will also provide an electronic version of his presentation.

The key issue that NMFS will discuss at the public forum is how fishery management regulations affect safety at sea. NMFS, working with the Regional Fishery Management Councils, administers three programs that significantly improve safety by effectively removing older, inefficient, and less safe vessels and upgrading the safety standards of vessels operating in federally managed fisheries. These programs are: (1) catch shares, (2) vessel buybacks, and (3) mandatory standards for vessels carrying observers.

I expect that the public forum will draw increased attention to this important issue and highlight the ways in which we all can help to reduce mortality, injuries, and accidents associated with commercial fishing operations. Safety at sea in marine fisheries has improved measurably in the past decade, but we strive to continue to make improvements.

If you have additional questions about our participation in the forum, you may contact Galen Tromble at (301) 713-2341.

Sincerely,

Eric C. Schwaab

THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR FISHERIES



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