

WILLIAM R. KEATING

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 26, 2013

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Mr. Russell Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Smith:

I am writing to follow-up on the enclosed letter, dated June 21, 2013. Ten Senators and Members of Congress wrote to you regarding the need to secure an increase in the total allowable catch (TAC) for the western bluefin tuna stock at November's annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). To date, we have not received a response to our initial letter, and the Advisory Committee for the U.S. Section to ICCAT will meet next month to prepare for the annual meeting.

The U.S. has agreed to a series of significant reductions in TAC throughout the past decade – from 2700mt in 2003 to 1750mt in 2013 – despite doubt surrounding accuracies and evolving interpretations of the scientific data available. It is my belief that a core objective of domestic fishery managers and international fishery negotiators is to strike an appropriate balance between the biological and economic risks associated with their decisions. Thus, I again respectfully urge you to take a pragmatic approach that advances the best interests of U.S. fisheries at the upcoming ICCAT meeting in November.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William R. Keating".

WILLIAM R. KEATING
Member of Congress