



January 31, 2014

**Statement by NOAA Fisheries on the Most Recent Letter from Chinese Authorities
Regarding the Bivalve Ban (*geoducks and other shellfish*) in Area 67**

NOAA's Office of Seafood Inspection received a letter from China's AQSIQ (the People's Republic of China's FDA counterpart) in response to the information provided by NOAA in December 2013. Based on the letter, China's ban on geoduck and other bivalve shellfish from FAO area 67 Northeast Pacific – which includes Alaska, Washington, Oregon and northern California – remains in effect with no change.

The latest letter included approximately 20 separate requests for information from U.S. authorities, including further clarification of testing protocols used in PSP and inorganic arsenic tests by the states, a detailed explanation of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, and detailed descriptions of our existing seafood safety protocols. The letter also included a request for a Chinese audit team to travel to the United States to conduct onsite evaluations of monitoring and testing processes.

Also in their letter, Chinese authorities informed NOAA that Chinese consumers eat the skin and digestive tract, or 'gutball,' as well as the flesh of geoducks. In the U.S., only the flesh is considered edible, while the skin and digestive tract are considered inedible.

Multiple state and federal agencies continue to be actively engaged in a coordinated effort to resolve this issue. The states and federal agencies are working hard to answer China's latest request for information so that U.S. companies can resume shipping these seafood products to China.

To view the January 2014 letter from China:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2014/01/docs/aqsiq_reply_to_us_jan_2014.pdf

To view the December 2013 letter to China:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2013/12/docs/final_hansenliu_geoducksreport.pdf

NOAA Fisheries' Seafood Inspection Program: <http://www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

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