



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**Office for Coastal Management**  
Silver Spring Metro Center, Building 4  
1305 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

January 19, 2017

Dear Members of the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Ecosystem Science Evaluation Panel:

We greatly appreciate the time and effort you devoted to providing the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) with an evaluation of how well the information produced by our investments in ecosystem science supports CRCP's mission. We fully understand that your commitment to serving on this evaluation panel meant that other responsibilities were put aside, and we thank you for your efforts. The purpose of the science evaluation, along with other program assessments, was to inform a strategic planning process that the CRCP will be undertaking over the next year, with the goal of creating a strategic plan that includes all of NOAA's coral conservation capabilities, along with clearly defining objectives and prioritizing actions so that coral reef ecosystems are protected and conserved. Because the full scope and components of the strategic planning process are still being determined, some of the specific actions to address your recommendations for improvements are yet to be fully defined. Please be assured that we have taken your input and advice very seriously and your comments and recommendations will be invaluable as we develop the strategic plan over the coming year.

Please refer to the attached document that outlines our responses to your recommendations. The first nine responses are those directed to the summary recommendations that Melanie, as panel chair, provided the last day of the review. For the rest of the document, we consolidated similar recommendations from your individual reviews and developed our responses from those.

We thank you for your time and dedication to the program and would like to update you in a year's time to report on progress we have made in addressing your recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Koss". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Jennifer Koss

Director, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program