

**Sample of letter or email intended for science teachers to be sent by the  
NOAA Fisheries National Education Coordinator**

SUBJECT: NOAA Fisheries Requests Voluntary Assistance in the Collection of Tuna Product Samples for their National Retail Market Spot Check Audit

I have been approached by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Tuna Tracking & Verification Program (TTVP) to request voluntary collaboration of high school science teachers and students in their undertaking of a retail market spot check of tuna products. The intent of the spot check is to verify the authenticity of dolphin-safe claims made on the labels of tuna products found in retail markets in various locations across the country.

In the past, NMFS staff members have traveled throughout the country to collect samples of canned/pouched tuna products (see <http://dolphinsafe.gov/vp.htm>). With voluntary teacher/student collaboration, samples could still be collected in various locations across the United States, yet also give students a hands-on opportunity to learn more about dolphin-safe tuna.

NMFS is asking each science class teacher to choose 1 or 2 students, willing to volunteer, to each purchase 2 cans or pouches of tuna from a local grocer and send them back to the TTVP. Once the product is received, the TTVP will be able to conduct the remaining portion of the spot check. The teacher may also elect to be one of the purchasers, too.

This is a great opportunity for teachers to partner with NMFS on a current relevant science topic. NMFS plans to release the findings of the spot check in a national press release, as well as in other Internet and media venues which can be good exposure for your school and class too.

Attached is a guidelines document discussing, in detail, how to purchase and ship the samples to the TTVP.

Science teachers wishing to voluntarily participate in this effort should email Bill Jacobson at [swrtuna.track@noaa.gov](mailto:swrtuna.track@noaa.gov) and cc Molly Harrison at [molly.harrison@noaa.gov](mailto:molly.harrison@noaa.gov) as soon as possible. Include in your email message, your name, school name, school address, school phone number, and class name. If after reviewing the attachments, you have additional questions regarding the spot check project, Bill can also be reached at (562) 980-4035.

I encourage your voluntary participation in this unique educational opportunity.



**NOAA** NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
TUNA TRACKING & VERIFICATION PROGRAM (TTVP)  
[www.DolphinSafe.Gov](http://www.DolphinSafe.Gov)**

**Retail Market Spot Check Audit of Tuna Products  
Purchasing & Shipping Guidelines**

**Purpose:** To collect tuna cans or pouches (in foil) from grocery stores to verify either: 1) the authenticity of the dolphin-safe logo/claim on the label, or, 2) absent a logo/claim, the legal production or importation of the product.

**Communication:** All volunteer teachers need to send an email message to [swrtuna.track@noaa.gov](mailto:swrtuna.track@noaa.gov) stating their interest in participating, as well as listing their name, contact phone number, school name, class name, and the city and state of the school they represent. This will aid in the tracking of the samples.

**Time Frame:** Volunteers are asked to make their purchases before (INSERT DATE). It would be greatly appreciated if the tuna sample purchases are made separate from other items you may be buying at the same time for personal use. Thus, the receipt would show only the sample purchases.

**Sample Quantity:** Each volunteer is asked to purchase two cans or pouches of tuna (or one of each) at the retail market location(s) of their choice (preferably within twenty miles of their school). One sample should be the brand and type you normally buy. The second sample can be an unusual or interesting brand that you may not normally buy at either the same store or at a different store than where you normally would shop.

**Sample Information:** Each can or pouch of tuna has one to three lines of can code data physically embossed or digitally written on the top or bottom lid. On foil pouches, the code is usually found on the back side. It is extremely important the can code information found on your sample is CLEARLY LEGIBLE. The can code, among other uses, distinguishes when and where the product was produced, which then allows for the identification of the fishing vessel and the vessel's trip dates associated with harvesting the tuna. An illegible can code is useless for spot check auditing purposes – *please pick samples with clearly legible code data*.

**Sample Sizes to Buy:** Typical can sizes are 3, 5 & 6 oz. Specialty products may be slightly smaller or larger and can be listed in grams. Typical pouch sizes are 3 oz or 7 oz. Buy what ever you size you like.

**Sample Varieties:** All tuna varieties are acceptable for spot check purchases. Examples of such are AChunk Light®, ASolid White®, ALow Sodium®, ALemon Pepper®, “in Oil”, “in Water”, etc.

**Sample Origin:** Imported or domestic tuna products are acceptable for spot check purchases.

**Shipping:** Use the FedEx shipping box the TTVP will provide you to send all of the samples at one time. The shipping label will already have the TTVP billing account number and return address filled in. To protect the samples inside the box, pad with crumpled newspaper. Go to <http://www.fedex.com/Dropoff/start> to find a FedEx Service Center near you to drop the box off for delivery. Please send the samples within 3 days of the last purchase.

The mailing address is:

Bill Jacobson  
Tuna Tracking & Verification Program  
NOAA Fisheries  
501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200  
Long Beach, CA 90802-4250  
Contact Phone (562) 980-4030

When returning the samples, please tape your receipt to each sample. If there is one receipt for two purchased samples, photocopy the receipt so that each sample has a receipt taped to it. If the receipt does not contain the store information on it (name, address, phone), please write this somewhere on the receipt as we need to identify the retailer.

**Reimbursement:** At this time, the TTVP is not able to reimburse the cost of the tuna samples. Thus, volunteers must understand ahead of time that they are volunteering their own time and money. Typically, the supermarket cost of a can or pouch of tuna ranges between \$0.75 and \$2.50, depending on the variety and size selected.

**Photographs:** We would like to have high quality photos (JPG format) of shoppers purchasing the samples and group snapshots of the class that can be used for public outreach and NOAA web pages. Photos of purchases need to be close enough so that the top half of the body fills most of the frame. Do not forget to include participant names. However, student names and photos (other than a class group photo) will not be used unless accompanied by a signed and dated release by the parent or guardian.

**Questions?** Contact Bill Jacobson at (562) 980-4035 or Chris Fanning at (562) 980-4198. For email questions, use [swrtuna.track@noaa.gov](mailto:swrtuna.track@noaa.gov). Normal office hours are conducted at Pacific Daylight Time.

Your help is appreciated. Each teacher will receive a blue DolphinSafe.Gov polo shirt (see enclosed image) to help promote the web site and the TTVP. Each participating student volunteer will receive a shopping tote bag with the NOAA emblem on it. A press release is being planned to discuss the findings of the spot check, as well as web page updates. For additional program information, go to <http://DolphinSafe.Gov>.

