



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

August 23, 2002

Jerry O. Ruehle
Environmental Coordinator
Alaska Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities
4111 Aviation Avenue
P.O. Box 196900
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6900

Re: Chignik Airport Access
EFH Assessment

Attn: Rae De Ley

Dear Mr. Ruehle:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT) provided National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) a supplemental Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment for the above referenced project dated July 17, 2002. Previously, ADOT determined that the proposed project may cause a minor adverse effect to EFH, and requested that NMFS review and comment on measures offered by ADOT. In a letter dated July 15, 2002, NMFS offered the following three additional EFH Conservation Measures.

- NMFS recommends that the proposed project not be considered a Categorical Exclusion.
- NMFS recommends that larger, flat or natural bottomed culverts be used in culvert replacement and installation in anadromous fish channels.
- Should culvert replacement and installation involve the use of heavy equipment working in close proximity to Humes Creek and the Unnamed Creek, NMFS recommends that in addition to conventional trenching other drilling methods such as trenchless pipe ramming or horizontal directional drilling be considered and evaluated.

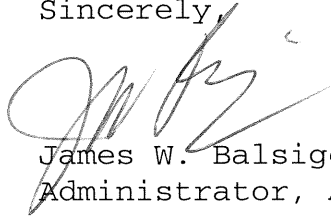
Subsequently, NMFS and ADOT staff have worked closely together to reach a mutual agreement that ADOT would minimize and avoid unnecessary impacts to EFH. In accordance with 50 CFR 600.920(k)(1), ADOT's July 17, 2002, letter to NMFS provided reasons for not following two of our recommendations. Although



ADOT is not fulfilling recommendations 1 and 3, your rationale offers insight into your decision making process, and your efforts to minimize and avoid unnecessary impacts to EFH are adequate. Therefore, no further EFH consultation is necessary and EFH consultation requirements have been satisfied.

NMFS remains available to assist ADOT if there are any additional EFH issues during the project. Please contact Mr. Matthew Eagleton at (907) 271-5006 if you require any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Balsiger', is written over the typed name.

James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: Corps, USFWS, EPA, ADGC, ADFG, ADEC - Anchorage
ADOT - Bill Ballard, Juneau