



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

*National Marine Fisheries Service*

*P.O. Box 21668*

*Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

November 7, 2003

Jerry O. Ruehle  
Environmental Coordinator  
Alaska Department of Transportation  
and Public Facilities  
4111 Aviation Drive  
P. O. Box 196900  
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-0473

Re: Seldovia Airport Master Plan  
State Project No. 54748

Attn: Rex Young

Dear Mr. Ruehle:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment, dated June 23, 2003, prepared by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) for the above referenced project. The proposed project involves improving Seldovia Airport facilities to meet current state airport design standards including: widening and paving the access road that extends over Fish Creek, installing a water line along the access road, embedding a 12 inch sewer pipeline under Seldovia Slough and Fish Creek, and extending the runway 53 feet to the north.

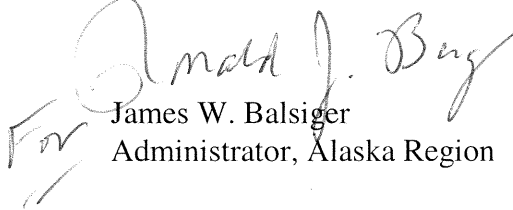
Under Section 305(b)(2) Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) Federal agencies are required to consult with the Secretary of Commerce regarding any action that may adversely affect EFH. Federal agencies must prepare an EFH Assessment for any action that may adversely affect EFH. The EFH Assessment may be a separate document or clearly referenced in a support document, such as an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement for the project. An EFH Assessment is outlined in 50 CFR Part 600.920 (e) and includes the mandatory contents: (i) a description of the action, (ii) an analysis of the effects on EFH, (iii) the agency's conclusions regarding the effects of the action on EFH, and (iv) proposed mitigation, if applicable.

ADOT&PF has determined that the project may adversely affect EFH. NMFS agrees with this determination. In accordance with 50 CFR 600.920 (f), consultation and commenting under sections 305(b)(2) and 305(b)(4) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act should be consolidated, where appropriate, with interagency consultation, coordination, and environmental review procedures required by other statutes such as NEPA. Therefore, to streamline the environmental review process NMFS will defer reviewing the EFH Assessment until we receive the EA, which we understand you intend to provide shortly. NMFS will provide comments on the EA and EFH Assessment at the same time.



Brian Lance is the NMFS contact for this project, and can be reached by telephone at (907) 271-1301.

Sincerely,

  
James W. Balsiger  
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: Travis/Peterson Environmental Consulting, Inc.  
3305 Arctic Boulevard, Suite 102  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503