



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

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

April 14, 2004

Brad Sworts, Project Manager
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Central Region - Planning
4111 Aviation Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99519

Re: Aniak Airport Master Plan
State Project Number 54740

Dear Mr. Sworts:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed your request on behalf of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for comments and information on a proposed Master Plan update for Aniak Airport. The purpose of the update is to guide the orderly development of the Aniak Airport over the next 20 years. The final products of the updated Master Plan will include a Master Plan Report, an Airport Layout Plan, and an Environmental Assessment.

Based on the information you have provided NMFS offers the following information under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

Threatened and Endangered Species

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA directs interagency cooperation "to insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species" or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. NMFS Alaska Region is responsible for the administration of the ESA as it applies to certain cetaceans, pinnipeds, and marine fish. These include several species of whales, Pacific salmon, and Steller sea lions.

The information you provided indicates that work would occur inland. Due to the inland location of your project, threatened and endangered species under our jurisdiction will not occur in the vicinity of the project site, and critical habitat for those listed species would not be affected.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

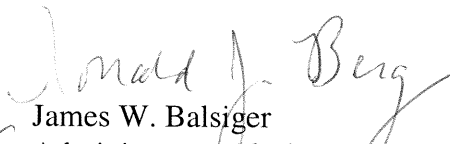
Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires interagency consultation for any federal action that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The Kuskokwim River and its tributaries are catalogued as anadromous fish streams by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and provide EFH for all five species of federally managed Pacific salmon. Based on the information you have provided, we do not expect the proposed project to adversely affect EFH.



NMFS does not offer any EFH conservation recommendations at this time and further EFH consultation is not necessary. However, please contact us in the future should FAA determine that any changes in planning or scope would adversely affect EFH. Information regarding EFH is available on our website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat>.

If you have questions concerning endangered species issues please contact Mr. Brad Smith at (907) 271-3023. Questions regarding EFH should be addressed to Mr. John Olson at (907) 271-1508.

Sincerely,


James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc. DOWL Engineers
4040 B Street
Anchorage, AK 99503