



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

*National Marine Fisheries Service  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

October 7, 2005

Colonel Timothy J. Gallagher  
District Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
P.O. Box 898  
Anchorage, Alaska 99506-0898

Dear Colonel Gallagher:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has been working with the Corps of Engineers and other agencies for more than a year now to evaluate the proposed Port of Anchorage expansion project (POA-2003-502) and recommend measures to minimize adverse effects to living marine resources. The Corps recently issued a permit for Phase 1 of the project. We understand that the Corps is working with the applicant to address issues associated with Phase 2, which would entail considerably greater environmental impacts than Phase 1.

A number of very important issues have not been resolved for this project, including design considerations related to minimizing adverse effects on habitat for salmon and beluga whales, and issues related to compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic habitats. Given the size and complexity of this project and the significant outstanding issues, NMFS recommends that the Corps convene a meeting of managers and appropriate staff from all the involved federal and state agencies. At the meeting the agencies could assess progress at resolving the remaining topics, and agree upon next steps. NMFS is concerned that without such a management-level discussion, important issues may not receive adequate attention, which could lead to disagreements between agencies regarding final permit decisions for Phase 2 of the project.

We hope you will accept this offer to meet and discuss our concerns. Jon Kurland, Assistant Regional Administrator for Habitat Conservation, is our contact for setting up a potential meeting. He can be reached at 907/586-7638.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Mecum  
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: Larry Reeder, COE  
Lenny Corin, USFWS  
Marcia Combes, EPA  
Kerry Howard, DNR OHMP  
Bill Jeffress, DNR OPMP

