



PSEIS UPDATE AND SCHEDULE

At its April 2004 meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) reviewed the preliminary Final PSEIS which included its recommendation on a preliminary preferred alternative, and the public comments received on the revised 2003 Draft Programmatic SEIS and the NOAA Fisheries' responses to those comments. Based on this review, and after receiving public testimony, the NPFMC provided NOAA Fisheries with its final recommendation on a preferred alternative. The NPFMC also recommended that the agency release the Final PSEIS after incorporating the NPFMC's decision into the document.

The preferred alternative reflects a conservative precautionary approach to fisheries management that incorporates ecosystem-based management principles. Adoption of this management framework sets new policy direction for the future. As a result, the NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries take pride in their efforts to exceed NEPA requirements through the public process it followed during the preparation of this PSEIS. The goals and objectives are measurable, performance-based, and will be used by the NPFMC and the public to determine progress toward an ecosystem-based management regime. The example FMP bookends serve to illustrate management concepts and future actions that logically flow from the NPFMC's preferred alternative policy. The FMPs provided sufficient detail to allow for analysis of their environmental consequences. The NPFMC believes that the Final PSEIS provides the public and decision-makers with the information needed to understand the challenges in managing a complex fishery, the uncertainties being faced, how managers are addressing those uncertainties, and the value of the Alaska groundfish fisheries to the residents of Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, and the nation.

The efforts made by the NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries to craft the preferred alternative and its associated bookends highlight two important issues: 1) it has served to bring various public and constituent groups together in a way that provides managers with an understanding of their views and ideas of how to incorporate these views into future policy decisions; and 2) the PSEIS process has forced the NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries to review its

past performance, successes and failures, and draft a programmatic policy for managing the Alaska groundfish fisheries in the future.

SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The project team is incorporating the NPFMC's final recommendation into the document and preparing the Final PSEIS for public release. The Final PSEIS is expected to be available for distribution in June 2004. The Final PSEIS will also be made available on the NOAA Fisheries-Alaska Region webpage on the Internet when released to the public. Individuals will be able to access all chapters and appendices, conduct word searches, and utilize the modern web-tools available to review the document for information of interest. **The webpage address is <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov>.**

The Final PSEIS will also be available on Compact Disc to be used with any personal computer with a CD drive. The CD will be formatted to allow readers to scan, scroll, and review the PSEIS. In some cases, illustrations contained in the PSEIS will appear better on your screen than when printed on paper. A CD copy of the PSEIS will save paper and desk space.

A final choice, is to request a copy of the Final PSEIS in printed format. Due to the scope of this PSEIS, the document is very large and will consist of numerous volumes. Currently, we expect that the document will be over 6,000 pages long. For this reason, a limited number of the 2004 Final PSEIS' will be printed due to its size, weight and shipping cost. However, NOAA Fisheries intends to make the document available in CD-rom or hard copy. **We request that if you are interested in receiving the Final PSEIS, to please contact us by May 5, 2004 to specify which format you prefer. Please fill out the enclosed form and mail it to: Anne Maki, URS Corporation, 2700 Gambell Street, Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99503, or call Ms. Maki at 907-261-9741.**

THE RECORD OF DECISION

Once the Final PSEIS is completed and ready for distribution, the Environmental Protection Agency will file a notice in the Federal Register, alerting the public that the document is available. NOAA Fisheries will also place a Notice of Availability on its website. NOAA Fisheries plans to issue a Record of Decision on this action sometime prior to September 1, 2004. The Record of Decision is a document that formally states the Agency's decision on the preferred alternative and approval of any amendments to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Fishery

Management Plans. Issuance of a Record of Decision formally brings the NEPA process on this federal action to a close. Once issued, copies of the Record of Decision will be available to download from the NOAA Fisheries website.

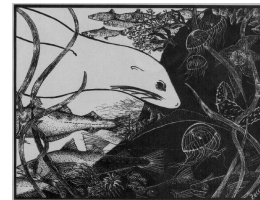
FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the recent NPFMC action, consult the NOAA Fisheries webpage at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov>, or contact Steve Davis at (907) 271-3523.



**National Atmospheric and Oceanic
Administration, National Marine
Fisheries Service
222 West 7th Ave., #517
Anchorage, AK 99513**

ALASKA GROUND FISH FISHERIES
PROGRAMMATIC SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



Final PSEIS Request Form

I would like to receive a copy of the Final Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Alaska Groundfish Fisheries. Please send CD or printed copy as indicated to the following address:

CD or Printed copy (Circle one)

If no preference is indicated, a CD will be sent

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

URS Corporation
Anne Maki
2700 Gambell, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99503