



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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

April 4, 2003

Mr. Reuben Yost
Regional Environmental Coordinator
Alaska Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, Alaska 99801-7999

RE: Juneau Access Improvement Project, #7100
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) Scoping Comments

Dear Mr. Yost:

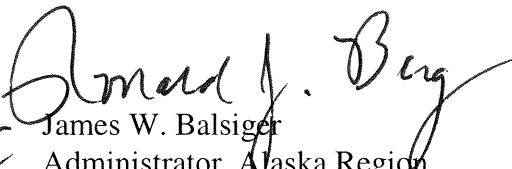
The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letters of February 21 and March 27, 2003, informing us that you are restarting the Juneau Access Improvement Project National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and requesting scoping comments. In particular, you asked for any changes in our agency's position regarding impact methodology for resources under our jurisdiction subsequent to our 1997 comments on the DEIS.

NMFS recommendations in our 1997 letters remain unchanged. You should prepare an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment for the updated SDEIS, as noted in your February 21 letter. You should also update the SDEIS with the aerial survey and remote camera data you have collected for Steller sea lion haulouts along the proposed East Lynn Canal Highway route. Enclosed for your information is an updated Marine Mammal Viewing Guideline brochure that includes information on humpback whale approach regulations that became effective in July, 2001. These regulations should be considered for the marine alternatives in the SDEIS. Also enclosed for your information is a 2003 preliminary report on wildlife and human use of Berners Bay, prepared by the United State Fish and Wildlife Service, that should be used to update the SDEIS. In addition, we recommend that you coordinate with the United States Forest Service (USFS) to utilize information collected in the Berners Bay area for the Kensington Mine project's current NEPA process. The USFS contact for the Kensington Mine project is Mr. Steve Hohensee (shohensee@fs.fed.us, phone, 907-790-7460).



We hope these comments are useful. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Linda Shaw at 907-790-2281.

Sincerely,

For 
James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

Enclosure: "Wildlife and Human Use of the Shoreline and Near-shore Waters of Berners Bay, Southeast Alaska", a preliminary report by the USFWS, Juneau, Alaska.

cc: EPA, Juneau
ADEC, AADGC, ADNR, ADF&G, USFWS, Juneau