

Mr. Guy McConnell  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Alaska District  
EN-CW-ER  
P.O. Box 898  
Anchorage, Alaska 99506-0898

Re: Akutan Small Boat Harbor  
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. McConnell:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed small boat harbor project located in Akutan, Alaska. This FEIS is the culmination of draft project designs, meetings, and scoping comments that specifically address the potential impacts the project may have on living marine resources under NOAA Fisheries jurisdiction.

The proposed project incorporates measures to avoid the direct loss of marine habitat and minimizes the footprint of the project in marine waters. These measures include a design to facilitate flushing and water quality; a construction timing window to avoid periods when sensitive fish life stages utilize or migrate through the project area; a horizontal shelf known as a fish-bench design within the breakwater that should facilitate nearshore fish movements; upland dredged material disposal areas, dedicated vessel waste management; and the development of a site specific oil spill response plan.

The Preferred Alternative is also the environmentally preferred alternative and FEIS Appendix 7 addresses specific concerns previously detailed by NOAA Fisheries to incorporate design changes that avoid and minimize impacts. NOAA Fisheries agrees with these project details and your selection of this alternative as the Preferred Alternative.

Section 3.3.6 *Essential Fish Habitat* identifies EFH resources in Akutan Harbor. Section 4.3.2 *Fish and Wildlife* states that all marine epifauna and infauna within the footprint of the breakwaters will be permanently destroyed. Section 4.3.5.2 *Mitigation Analysis* states that the discharge of dredged material offshore into Akutan Harbor would adversely impact king crab and fish, if that disposal alternative were chosen. Section 4.3.6. *Essential Fish Habitat* details the fish species within the project area. Further, Appendix 7 A-3 concludes that by incorporating agency recommendations, design modifications, monitoring, and mitigation that will compensate, to the extent practicable, for any unavoidable impacts.

The FEIS does not specifically state whether adverse effect to EFH remain, but NOAA Fisheries determined from these sections that effects on EFH have been minimized in the preliminary preferred alternative. Therefore, EFH consultation is complete.

To facilitate future consultations, NOAA Fisheries recommends that all environmental assessments and environmental impact statements clearly incorporate by reference the mandatory

components of an EFH Assessment [50 CFR 600.920(e)(3); description of the action; effects analysis; action agency conclusions; mitigation] or separate out these components into an EFH Assessment, if applicable.

If you have any questions regarding our comments please contact Matthew P. Eagleton in Anchorage at (907) 271-6354.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Kennedy  
NEPA Coordinator

cc: ADEC,ADFG,USFWS,EPA - Anchorage