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November 27, 2000

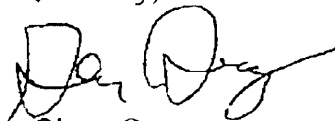
Chief, Marine Mammal Division
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The State of Alaska appreciates this opportunity to comment on the proposed rule to limit the harvest and use of Cook Inlet beluga whales published in the October 4, 2000 *Federal Register* and the October 2000 draft environmental impact statement.

The State of Alaska supports the approach proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service to regulate the harvest of beluga whales in Cook Inlet. We agree that this action will provide the most effective means to increase the beluga whale population. Additionally, we support the conclusion in the draft environmental impact statement that the cumulative impacts of activities on beluga whales, other than subsistence harvest, are minimal. We support retention of this conclusion in the final environmental impact statement. Lastly, we agree that the Upper Cook Inlet region is important habitat for the Cook Inlet beluga whale population and that the potential pressures from other activities need to be monitored.

This concludes our comments on the proposed regulations and the draft environmental impact statement. Should you have any questions about these comments, please contact me by calling (907) 465-8792 or by email at Glenn_Gray@gov.state.ak.us.

Sincerely,



Glenn Gray
Project Analyst

Chief Marine Mammal Division

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cc: Judge Parlen McKenna
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