



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

*National Marine Fisheries Service*

*P.O. Box 21668*

*Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

June 22, 2004

Dear interested person,

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Region has released to the public and filed its Final Recommendation for Beluga Harvest Plan and several supporting documents in a formal rule-making and adjudication process entitled Proposed Regulations Governing the Taking of Cook Inlet, Alaska, Beluga Whales by Alaska Natives, Docket #0092272-0272-01. This plan sets forth a Native subsistence harvest regime for the future. Presently, interim regulations set forth the harvest regime through this year. In consideration of the need for a hearing to consider adoption of this plan and implementing it in regulations, NMFS is following directives from Administrative Law Judge Parlen L. McKenna.

The following procedures were ordered by Administrative Law Judge McKenna:

An administrative hearing is scheduled to commence on August 2, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. in the Anchorage Federal Building (222 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Anchorage, AK). All testimony from formally-appearing parties, such as the Marine Mammal Commission, the Native Village of Tyonek, Cook Inlet Treaty Tribes, and NMFS, is presented to the Administrative Law Judge McKenna during this time. However, for those persons who are not formal parties to the proceeding, Judge McKenna is permitting persons who are not formal parties to make oral comments at the hearing. Persons who wish to make oral comments can do so by sending **–no later than July 15, 2004–** a fax copy or hard copy by mail of such comments to the:

ALJ Docketing Center  
United States Coast Guard  
Attn: Gladys Kaitell-Paul  
40 So. Gay Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
(410) 962-1742 (fax)

Failure to submit such comments will result in that person not being allowed to testify at the hearing. Each person allowed to testify at the hearing will be restricted by a time limit established by the court at the time of the hearing. Testimony for persons who are not formal parties is scheduled for the afternoon of August 3, 2004, at the Anchorage Federal Building (222 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Anchorage, AK).

Copies of the harvest plan are available at our website:

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/whales/beluga.htm>

Please direct any questions to Barbara Mahoney at (907) 271-3448.

Sincerely,

Kaja A. Brix

Asst Regional Administrator for Protected Resources

