



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

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

April 7, 2003

Colonel Steven T. Perrenot
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Alaska District
P.O. Box 898
Anchorage, Alaska 99506-0898

Re: D-2002-0544
Resurrection Bay

Attn: Daniel Smith

Dear Colonel Perrenot:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the above referenced proposal by Crest Communication Corporation. The proposed project involves laying a submarine fiber optic telecommunications cable between Seward, Alaska and Oregon. The project will include a single fiber optic cable with a diameter of 1 to 3 inches. In the ocean, DC powered amplifiers will be located along the cable approximately every 50 miles. The submerged amplifiers are approximately 17 feet long and are 12 inches at their widest point, tapering at each end to the diameter of the cable. The cable will be laid on the ocean floor for most of the route and will come ashore in Seward at the existing landing site of the North Pacific Cable. Below the mean low water line, the cable will be buried by natural sediment reposition, by a cable-plowing machine, or by hand-held jet probes operated by scuba divers. Above the mean low water line, the cable will be buried by conventional utility trenching. Construction for the entire project would start in spring 2004 and be completed by January 2005. A spur from this cable to Shemya, Alaska may be built in the future.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires NMFS to make conservation recommendations regarding any federal action that would adversely affect EFH.

EFH Conservation Recommendations

1. Avoid laying cable over high relief bottom habitat and across "live" bottom habitats such as coral and sponge. If coral or sponge habitats are encountered NMFS would be interested in position and description information.

Rationale - "Live" bottom habitats such as coral and sponge are relatively rare, exhibit high biological diversity, and are Habitats Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC). HAPC are identified on the basis of ecological importance, sensitivity, exposure, and rarity of the habitat.



2. Consult and coordinate with the fishing industry through the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Rationale - Avoid conflicts with fishing gear by sharing information on issues such as project location and timing.

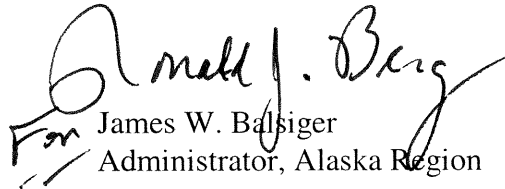
3. Once the project reaches the slope, bury or anchor the cable to the bottom.

Rationale - Avoidance of fouling with fishing gear.

Please note that under section 305(b)(4) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Corps is required to respond in writing within 30 days to NMFS recommendations. If the Corps does not make a decision within 30 days of receiving NMFS EFH Conservation Recommendations, the Corps should provide NMFS with a letter to that effect, and indicate when a full response will be provided.

Brian Lance is the NMFS contact for this project, and can be reached at (907) 271-1301.

Sincerely,


For James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: USFWS, EPA, ADGC, ADFG, ADEC - Anchorage

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2809

NOAA, Coast Survey
Attn: Doug Baird
4230 University Drive #102
Anchorage, AK 99508