



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

*National Marine Fisheries Service*

*P.O. Box 21668*

*Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

April 30, 2003

Harry A. Baij, Jr  
Chief, Project Evaluation Section  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Alaska District  
P. O. Box 898  
Anchorage, Alaska 99506

Re: 2-2003-0294  
Sweeper Cove 1

Attn: Mr. Daniel Smith

Dear Mr. Baij:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the above referenced public notice for proposed work by the City of Adak in Sweeper Cove on the island of Adak in the Aleutian Islands. The proposed work consists of: (1) enlarging the existing small boat harbor in Sweeper Cove by excavating approximately 250,000 cubic yards of fill from a 6-acre area, which was formerly a natural lagoon; (2) constructing two new breakwaters at the harbor entrance with excavated material from the small boat harbor enlargement and rock material from local quarries; (3) constructing a new boat haul-out inside the harbor; (4) constructing an approximately 315 ft-long perimeter sheet pile retaining wall/dock inside the harbor; and (5) relocating existing floats within the harbor and installing new pre-cast concrete and/or timber float. The final configuration of the breakwaters and layout of the float system has not yet been determined.

The Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed activity may result in adverse effects to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for red king crab, golden king crab, and scarlet king crab. NMFS agrees that the project would adversely affect EFH for these species. In addition, the project would adversely affect EFH for arrowtooth flounder, atka mackerel, dusky rockfish, flathead sole, northern rockfish, Pacific cod, Pacific ocean perch, rock sole, sablefish, tanner crab, walleye pollock, weathervane scallop, and pink and coho salmon.

NMFS bases our review on the information provided by the Corps. Our ability to evaluate potential impacts of this project to EFH and associated marine resources is limited because the proposed design and configuration are not complete. NMFS requests more detailed design information for the project so we can complete our review and provide more detailed recommendations. The design should be based on a wind and wave analysis for the site, and should minimize the footprint of any proposed fill.



NMFS is concerned about cumulative adverse impacts resulting from this project. Modifications to the water circulation patterns could degrade water quality. Construction and expansion of the harbor could increase the levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and other contaminants in nearby habitats. Harbor expansion could result in further commercial development of adjacent lands and marine areas for support services and additional impacts in the area of the proposed activity.

#### EFH Conservation Recommendations

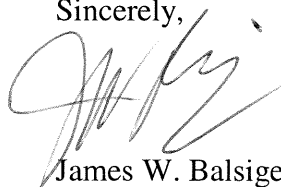
NMFS offers the following EFH Conservation Recommendations pursuant to section 305(b)(4)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act:

(1) NMFS recommends that the Corps consider an alternative that would minimize adverse effects on living marine resources, including EFH. The existing pile supported dock at the northern side of the entrance to the small boat harbor already acts as a breakwater. Additional measures, such as placing camels on the northwest side of this pier, could further enhance wave attenuation. Pile supported structures do not significantly alter nearshore habitats, migration corridors, or vegetation. Also, pilings may provide vertical relief (vertical habitat) for crabs, anemones, and juvenile fish. This alternative would minimize the extent of the fill and reduce the project cost, and may provide a safer navigational approach into the small boat harbor.

(2) Dredging and the placement of dredged material result in unavoidable suspension of sediment into the water column. NMFS recommends using sediment curtains to minimize the extent of turbidity and sedimentation, and avoiding all dredging activities between July 1 and September 30 of any year to prevent impacts to spawning aggregations of atka mackerel. Also, NMFS recommends conducting a sediment chemistry analysis for the area to be dredged if the applicant proposes to dispose of dredged material in the nearshore area.

Please note that under section 305(b)(4)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Corps is required to respond in writing within 30 days to NMFS' EFH Conservation Recommendations. If the Corps does not make a decision within 30 days, the Corps should provide NMFS with a letter to that effect, and indicate when a full response will be provided. Lieutenant Mark Boland or Mr. Matt Eagleton are the NMFS contacts for this project, they can be reached at (907) 271-5006.

Sincerely,



James W. Balsiger  
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: USFWS, ADFG, ADEC, ADGC, EPA - Anchorage  
City of Adak, Applicant.

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