December 22, 2003

Jerry O. Ruehle
Environmental Coordinator
Alaska Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities
4111 Aviation Drive
P. O. Box 196900
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-0473

Re: FHWA Flood Repairs Six Locations-Kenai
State Project No. 56938

Attn: Dan Golden

Dear Mr. Ruehle:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment prepared by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) for the above referenced project. ADOT&PF, in cooperation with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), is proposing to finish emergency repair work begun after the damage caused by the Fall 2002 flooding that occurred at six locations along the Sterling Highway. At the Anchor River site (#12), MP 160.5 Sterling Highway, two 48-inch diameter culverts were installed and the existing slopes were armored with riprap. The in-water work would include the installation of headwalls on the inlet and outlet sides of the two newly installed culverts and an existing 48-inch diameter culvert.

Based on the scope and nature of impacts expected from the project and associated mitigation measures, ADOT&PF on behalf of the FHWA, has determined that the work associated with the proposed project will not have substantial adverse individual or cumulative effects on EFH in the project area. NMFS concurs that the described action will have minimal impact to EFH, and will not result in any substantive adverse effect. NMFS does not offer any EFH conservation recommendations and supports the conservation measures described in the EFH assessment . No further EFH Assessment is required, and further EFH consultation is not necessary.

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

Sincerely,

James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc :EPA, USFWS, DEC, DNR/OHMP in Anchorage