



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

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

July 3, 2003

Thomas Puchlerz
Forest Supervisor
Tongass National Forest
648 Mission Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Attn: Steve Hohensee, Project Manager

Re: Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for amended 1998 Plan of Operations for the Kensington Gold Project

Dear Mr. Puchlerz:

Thank you for inviting the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to assume cooperating agency status under the National Environmental Policy Act for the referenced SEIS. NMFS appreciates your recognition of areas under our expertise as important for analyses of potential marine resource impacts from the project. However, we decline the invitation because cooperating agency status is unnecessary for our successful collaboration on the project. We wish to assure the Tongass National Forest that NMFS will cooperate to the fullest extent possible to facilitate development of the SEIS and adequate consideration of resources under our jurisdiction. We will participate actively in the Interdisciplinary Team, adhere to the SEIS review schedule, suggest potential mitigation measures and alternatives related to marine transportation and aquatic resources, and include the Forest Service in any pertinent meetings with Coeur Alaska.

We appreciate the efforts of Mr. Steve Hohensee to coordinate our involvement, and look forward to continued cooperation on the project. Ms. Linda Shaw (586-7510) is the NMFS contact for this project.

Sincerely,

Jonathan M. Kurland
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Habitat Conservation

cc: Mike Payne, NMFS, PR Division

