



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

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

February 16, 2005

Henri R. Bisson
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Alaska State Office
222 West 7th Avenue, #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599

Attn: Jeanie Cole

Dear Mr. Bisson:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letter concerning the Bay Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. NMFS offers the following information under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

Threatened and Endangered Species

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA directs federal interagency cooperation "to insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species" or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. NMFS is responsible for the administration of the ESA as it applies to listed cetaceans and pinnipeds in Alaska. These include seven species of endangered whales (fin, right, humpback, blue, sperm, sei and bowhead whales) and the endangered western population of Steller sea lions.

No endangered or threatened species for which NMFS bears responsibility occur on the land covered by the plan. Your evaluation of the effects to these species should consider secondary impacts, which may include near shore waters. Steller sea lions occur throughout this region in waters of Bristol Bay and the southeastern Bering Sea. These animals are from the endangered Western Distinct Population Segment of this species. No designated critical habitat for this species occurs in the planning area. Additional information on protected resources is available at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources>.

Essential Fish Habitat

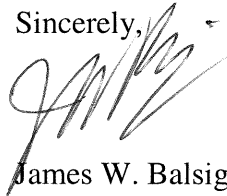
Under Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, federal agencies are required to consult with the Secretary of Commerce on any action that may adversely affect EFH. EFH has been



designated in waters for anadromous fish, specifically salmon, and certain life stages of marine fish under NMFS' jurisdiction. Five fishery management plans exist for fisheries in Alaska. They cover groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska, groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, crab in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, and salmon and scallops statewide. Please visit our web site at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat> for additional information on habitat and EFH information.

Questions regarding ESA should be addressed to Brad Smith. Questions regarding EFH should be addressed to Jeanne Hanson. They can both be reached in our Anchorage Office at (907) 271-5006.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Balsiger', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region