



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

July 26, 2007

Mr. Chris Oliver, Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252

Dear Chris:

We have approved Amendment 80 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI). This amendment allocates non-pollock groundfish in the BSAI among trawl sectors and creates a limited access privilege program (LAPP) to facilitate the formation of harvesting cooperatives in the non-American Fisheries Act (non-AFA) trawl catcher/processor sector. The Council adopted Amendment 80 to meet the broad goals of (1) improving retention and utilization of fishery resources by the non-AFA trawl catcher/processor fleet by extending the groundfish retention standard to non-AFA trawl catcher/processor vessels of all lengths; (2) allocating fishery resources among BSAI trawl harvesters in consideration of historic and present harvest patterns and future harvest needs; (3) authorizing the allocation of groundfish species to harvesting cooperatives and establishing a LAPP for the non-AFA trawl catcher/processors to reduce potential GRS compliance costs, encourage fishing practices with lower discard rates, and improve the opportunity for increasing the value of harvested species; and (4) limiting the ability of non-AFA trawl catcher/processors to expand their harvesting capacity into other fisheries not managed under a LAPP. NMFS intends to publish a final rule to implement Amendment 80 in August 2007.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Mecum
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

