



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 14, 2011

Dear Alaska Native and community representatives:


The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has released proposed regulations to implement Amendment 93 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska. The purpose of Amendment 93 is to limit the accidental catch of Chinook salmon in the pollock fisheries in the Central and Western Reporting Areas of the Gulf of Alaska. If approved, Amendment 93 would establish annual prohibited species catch limits of 18,316 and 6,684 Chinook salmon for the pollock fisheries in the Central and Western GOA pollock fisheries, respectively. Amendment 93 also would require full retention of all salmon taken in these fisheries until they can be sampled, and may establish observer coverage requirements for vessels under 60 feet length overall in the pollock fisheries. Enclosed is a copy of the proposed rule for Amendment 93. I encourage you to review this document and provide comments. Public comment will be accepted on this action until January 23, 2012.

Once we have reviewed all public comments, the Secretary of Commerce will take final agency action to approve, disapprove, or partially approve Amendment 93. If the Secretary of Commerce approves Amendment 93, NMFS will publish the final implementing regulations. The preamble to the final rule would include responses to all timely comments received on Amendment 93 and the proposed rule.

NMFS has special obligations to consult and coordinate with tribal governments under Executive Order 13175 and with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004. If you represent a tribe or ANCSA corporation, you have the opportunity to consult with NMFS about this proposed action at any time prior to our final decision, which will occur no later than February 22, 2012. However, if you have comments on this proposed action, it would be most effective if you submitted them during the public comment period so that they can be considered when we prepare the final rule.

Additional information, including the Draft Environmental Assessment and Regulatory Impact Review prepared for this action, is available on NMFS Alaska Region website (<http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/>). If you have any questions or wish to request a consultation with NMFS, please contact Mary Grady at 907-586-7228 or mary.grady@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,


for James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.
Administrator, Alaska Region

Enclosure

