



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

*National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668*

April 15, 2008

Dear Tribal Representative:

Please find enclosed the proposed rule to amend subsistence halibut fishing regulations in waters in and off Alaska. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is proposing to adjust gear and harvest restrictions and would provide additional measures to enhance enforcement and address an issue specific to Alaska Native tribal access. This proposed change to the subsistence halibut policy was developed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), and later recommended for action by the Council in December 2004. Consultations by the Council and NMFS with the Alaska Native Subsistence Halibut Working Group resulted in recommendations to allow the use of special permits in non-subsistence use areas.

NMFS has special obligations to consult and coordinate with tribal governments and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations on a government-to-government basis pursuant to Executive Order 13175 and the Executive Memorandum of April 29, 1994, on "Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments." As a result of your tribal or ANCSA corporation status, you have the opportunity to comment to NMFS at any time; however, only comments submitted during the proposed rule comment period would be considered in the development of the final rule for this action. I encourage you to submit written comments by mail or by email. The enclosed proposed rule provides additional information on this action and instructions for submitting comments.

Additionally, you have the opportunity to consult with and provide comments to NMFS in person. To request a meeting with NMFS, please contact Becky Carls at 907-586-7322. I look forward to working with you on this action. For more information on the proposed rule, please visit our website at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/index/prules/prules.asp?Yr=2008>.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Mecum
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

Enclosure

