UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment for Issuing an Exempted Fishing Permit for the Purpose of Testing a Salmon Excluder Device in the Eastern Bering Sea Pollock Fishery, November 2014

LOCATION: Eastern Bering Sea, Exclusive Economic Zone

SUMMARY: This Environmental Assessment analyzes alternatives on issuance of an exempted fishing permit for continued testing of a salmon excluder device in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery. The experiment would be conducted from the winter pollock A season in 2015 through the winter A season, 2016. The pollock trawl fishery catches up to 95 percent of the Chinook salmon taken incidentally as bycatch in the Bering Sea groundfish fisheries. Salmon excluder devices reduce salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery, reducing potential effects on the salmon stocks and the cost to the pollock fishing industry. This EFP would allow the development and testing of a new excluder design to reduce both Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch rates without significant negative effects on pollock fishing. The proposed action is not expected to have significant impacts on the human environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: James W. Balsiger, Ph.D., Regional Administrator
Alaska Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, AK 99802
(907) 586-7221

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the environmental assessment, is enclosed for your information.

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Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the Responsible Official named above.

Sincerely,

TRONVIG.KRISTEN.A.1365886012

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Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator
for

Enclosure