APPENDIX I

Notice of Intent

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9:00 p.m. and October 21, 1999 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon; and Kansas City, MO, October 27, 1999, from 12:00 Noon to 9:00 p.m. Specific locations for each city are detailed in the next section

ADDRESSES. Procedures for pre-registering for and testifying at these public hearings are detailed in the "Hearings Procedures" subsection of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

ADDRESSES: EPA's public hearings to receive comments on the Agency's proposed radiation protection standards for Yucca Mountain, Nevada will be held on October 13, 1999, at the Ronald Reagan Building (Federal Triangle Metro Stop), International Trade Center, Hemisphere B Meeting Room, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC; on October 19, 1999, at the Amargosa Valley Community Center, 821 East Farm Road, Amargosa Valley, NV; on October 20 and 21, 1999 at the Las Vegas Conference Suites and Services, Room 111, 101 Convention Center Drive, Las Vegas, NV; and on October 27, 1999, at the Kansas City Convention Center, Conference Center—Room 4201, 14th Street between Wyandotte and Central, Kansas City, MO.

EPA's official docket for this rule, including technical support documents and other documents and materials relevant to this rule, are filed in Docket No. A-95-12 of the Air Docket, located in Room M-1500 (first floor in Waterside Mall near the Washington Information Center), U.S. EPA, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460-0001. EPA has also established "Information Files" for this rule at two locations in Nevada: the Government Publications Section of the Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, 4504 Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV, and the Public Library in Amargosa Valley, NV.

As provided in EPA's regulations at 40 CFR Part 2, and in accordance with normal Air docket procedures, if copies of any docket materials are requested, a reasonable fee may be charged for photocopying.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rafaela Ferguson, Office of Radiation and Indoor Air, (202) 564-9362 or call EPA's 24-hour toll-free Yucca Mountain Information Line, 1-800-331-9477.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. Department of Energy is developing a potential geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. As mandated by the Energy Policy Act of 1992, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed site-specific public health and safety standards for the potential repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. On August 27, 1999, EPA published the proposed radiation protection standards for Yucca Mountain, Nevada in the **Federal Register** at 64 FR 46976-47016. Simultaneously, a 90-day public comment period on the Agency's proposed rule began. The public comment period closes November 26, 1999. Once EPA's standards are finalized, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is responsible for implementing those standards.

Hearings Procedures

Persons wishing to testify at the public hearings are requested to pre-register by calling EPA's toll-free Yucca Mountain Information Line at 1-800-331-9477 between the hours of 12:00 Noon and 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) with the following information: Name/Organizational Affiliation (if any)/hearing date, location, time(s) available to testify, and a daytime telephone number. In order to obtain a scheduled speaking time, requests must be received by EPA no later than 7:00 p.m. EST October 12, 1999 for the hearings in Washington, DC; October 18, 1999 for the hearings in Amargosa Valley and Las Vegas, NV; and October 22, 1999, for the hearings in Kansas City, MO. Speakers not registered in advance may register at the door. Individuals testifying on their own behalf will be allowed 5 minutes. One individual may testify as the official representative or spokesperson on behalf of groups and organizations and will be allocated ten minutes for an oral presentation. Time allowed is exclusive of any time consumed by questions from the government panel and answers to these questions. Testimony from individuals and representatives of organizations is limited to one hearing location. Substitutions will not be permitted for any pre-registered person. Registrants will not be permitted to yield their time to other individuals or groups, nor will hearing time be used to "read into the record" testimony from individuals not present at the hearings. In the event any person wishes to enter comments for the record, but either cannot or does not appear personally at the hearings, written comments will be accepted by EPA during the hearings. These written comments will be considered to the same extent as oral testimony and will be included as part of the official hearings transcripts. The hearing transcript will constitute the official record of the hearings. Written comments submitted outside of the public hearings must be received by EPA Docket No. A-95-12 in Washington, DC by November 26, 1999. All comments received by EPA, whether written or oral, will be given equal consideration in development of the final rule.

Dated: September 27, 1999.

Robert Brenner,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation.

[FR Doc. 99-25566 Filed 9-30-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[I.D. 092799E]

Groundfish Fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Area

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of intent; scoping meetings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its intention to prepare a programmatic supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) on Federal groundfish fishery management in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters off Alaska. The scope of the analysis will include all activities addressing the conduct of groundfish fisheries authorized and managed under two of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's fishery management plans (FMPs): Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), and amendments thereto; and Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (BSAI), and amendments thereto.

NMFS will hold scoping meetings to receive public input on the structure of the alternatives and the range of issues to be covered in the programmatic SEIS. NMFS is accepting written comments on the same topics.

DATES: Written comments will be accepted through November 15, 1999 (see ADDRESSES). See SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION, Public Involvement for meeting dates.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests to be included on a mailing list of persons interested in the programmatic SEIS should be sent to Lori Gravel, Sustainable Fisheries Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802. Comments may also be hand-

delivered to Room 457–1 Federal Office Building, 907 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**, Public Involvement for meeting locations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Davis, NMFS, (907) 271-3523.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the United States has exclusive fishery management authority over all living marine resources found within the EEZ, except marine mammals and birds. The management of these marine resources is vested in the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary). Eight Regional Fishery Management Councils prepare FMPs for approval and implementation by the Secretary. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has the responsibility to prepare FMPs for the fishery resources that require conservation and management in the EEZ off Alaska. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council consists of Federal and state officials having authority for fishery management, and of private persons nominated by the governors of the States of Alaska, Oregon, and Washington, and appointed by the Secretary.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires preparation of environmental impact statements (EISs) for major Federal actions significantly impacting the quality of the human environment. 40 CFR 1502.9(c) states: "Agencies shall prepare supplements to either draft or final environmental impact statements if: (i) The agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns; or (ii) There are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts."

The Council prepared, and the Secretary approved, the Fishery Management Plan for Gulf of Alaska Groundfish in 1978 and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area in 1981. EISs were prepared for those FMPs and were filed in 1978 and 1981, respectively. Both FMPs have been amended numerous times. NEPA environmental documents (categorical exclusion, environmental assessments, or EISs) have been prepared for each FMP amendment and regulatory amendment. Additionally, NMFS prepared and issued an SEIS for the groundfish fisheries authorized under both FMPs in December 1998. In July 1999, the U.S. District Court, Western District of Washington at Seattle (NO. C98–0492Z) ruled in *Greenpeace* v. *NMFS* that the 1998 SEIS was legally inadequate, and remanded the document to NMFS for further action consistent with the requirements of NEPA.

In this document, NMFS announces its intent to prepare a programmatic SEIS that defines the Federal action under review as, among other things, all activities authorized and managed under the FMPs and all amendments thereto, and that addresses the conduct of the GOA and BSAI groundfish fisheries and the FMPs as a whole. NMFS will present in the SEIS an overview and an assessment of all impacts (including environmental, biological, and socio-economic) that result from directed and incidental groundfish harvest regulations affecting amount of harvest, location of harvest, time of harvest, method of harvest, distribution of harvest among fishermen, use of the harvest, and methods used to monitor harvest and the fisheries. Also, NMFS will identify and evaluate the significant changes that have occurred in the GOA and BSAI groundfish fisheries, including significant cumulative effects of environmental and management changes in the groundfish fisheries since the issuance of the 1978 and 1981 EISs. Further, NMFS will also analyze the impacts (including environmental, biological and socio-economic) resulting from the current fishery management regime, and reasonable alternatives to the current management regime. The Responsible Program Manager for this SEIS is Steven Pennoyer, Alaska Regional Administrator, NMFS.

Alternatives

The SEIS will consider a range of alternative harvest management regimes, incorporating variations on various elements of the FMPs. It will not consider detailed alternatives for every aspect of the FMPs. A principal objective, therefore, of the scoping and public input processes is to identify a reasonable set of programmatic management alternatives that, with adequate analysis, will sharply define critical issues and provide a clear basis for choice among the alternatives.

Management of the GOA and the BSAI groundfish fisheries pursuant to the FMPs involves decision making that can result in changes to the harvest management strategy. Accordingly, in the programmatic SEIS, NMFS will consider a full range of management alternatives, including the No Action alternative (i.e., the management regime currently in place would continue to apply), and evaluate their potential environmental impacts (including biological and socio-economic). Through this scoping process, NMFS requests public input on the management alternatives that should be considered in this programmatic SEIS. Prior to the scoping meetings, NMFS will publish in the **Federal Register** draft alternatives to be developed further at the public scoping meetings and in the programmatic SEIS.

Issues

The environmental consequences section of the EIS will display the impacts of groundfish harvest accruing with present management regulations and under a range of representative alternative management regulations on North Pacific and Bering Sea ecosystem issues. These issues include: (1) Marine habitat, (2) major species of fish, (3) major species and groups of invertebrates, (4) marine mammals, (5) seabirds, and (6) cumulative and synergistic impacts on species across the foodweb. In addition, the environmental consequences section will contain summary, interpretation, and predictions for socio-economic issues associated with conduct of those fisheries on the following groups of individuals: (1) Those who participate in harvesting the groundfish resources and other living marine resources, (2) those who process and market the fish and fishery products, (3) those who are involved in allied support industries, (4) those who consume fishery products, (5) those who rely on living marine resources in the management area either for subsistence needs or for recreational benefits, (6) those who benefit from non-consumptive uses of living marine resources, (7) those involved in managing and monitoring fisheries, and (8) fishing communities.

Consultations

Pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), consultations for listed species and critical habitat affected by these fisheries have been or will be initiated and will be prepared in parallel with development of the programmatic SEIS. These consultations will be conducted in accordance with the ESA and implementing regulations, 50 CFR 402 *et seq.*, and will analyze the individual and cumulative impacts of activities relating to the groundfish fisheries authorized and managed under the FMPs, and amendments thereto, to determine whether the cumulative impacts of the groundfish fisheries are likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species, including Steller sea lions, or adversely modify

critical habitat. Results from these consultations will be incorporated into the SEIS to the maximum extent practicable. The schedule for completion of consultation will correspond generally to the schedule for the issuance of the programmatic SEIS as the information, evaluations, and conclusions that are required for both documents will be similar in many respects.

Public Involvement

Scoping for the programmatic SEIS begins with publication of this notice. An informational presentation of the project will be made during the Council's October meeting (Seattle, WA, Seattle Airport, Doubletree Hotel, October 10 through 18, 1999.) Subsequent scoping meetings will be held in Anchorage, Juneau, Kodiak, and Seattle at the following times and locations:

1. Juneau—November 8, 1999, 1–3 p.m., Juneau Federal Building, Room 445, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK.
2. Anchorage—November 9, 1999, 1–3 p.m., Anchorage Federal Building, Room 135, 222 West Seventh Avenue, Anchorage, AK.
3. Kodiak—November 10, 1999, 1–3 p.m., Kodiak Inn, 236 West Rezanof Drive, Kodiak, AK.
4. Seattle-November 12, 1–3 p.m., Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Building 4, Room 2039, Seattle, WA.

Special Accommodations

Theses meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities, Reqests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Rebecca Campbell (907) 586–7228 at least 5 days before the meeting dates.

Dated: September 27, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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