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

MAR 1 1 2013

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 Central Gulf of Alaska Pollock Fishery, January 2013

LOCATION: Gulf of Alaska, Exclusive Economic Zone

SUMMARY: This Environmental Assessment analyzes alternatives to issue an exempted fishing permit for testing of a salmon excluder device in the Central Gulf of Alaska (GOA) pollock trawl fishery. The experiment would be conducted during the spring and fall of 2013 and 2014. The pollock trawl industry continues to experience Chinook salmon bycatch even though salmon bycatch measures are in place. Salmon excluder devices have been tested in the Bering Sea and are successful in reducing salmon bycatch. The purpose of extending these tests to the GOA is to test the potential of these devices for reducing Chinook salmon bycatch and lowering the cost of bycatch measures on the pollock fishing industry. This exempted fishing permit would allow for development and testing of a salmon excluder device in the GOA with focused efforts on reducing Chinook salmon bycatch and refinement in the design and operation of the salmon excluder device. The proposed action is not expected to have significant impacts on the human environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: James W. Balsiger, Ph.D., Regional Administrator
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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,

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure