



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

July 26, 2004

Christa Fagnant
State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, Alaska 99801-7999

Re: Coffman Cove Seaplane Float
Relocation

Dear Ms. Fagnant:

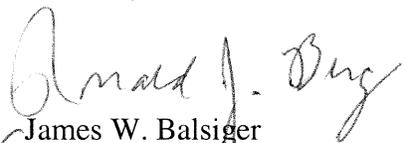
The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the request for scoping comments for the relocation of the Seaplane Float in Coffman Cove. The proposal is to relocate the seaplane float near the new ferry terminal facility in order to facilitate transportation and transfer of passengers and freight between the ferry terminal and the seaplane float.

In March 2004, NMFS reviewed an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment and an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Coffman Cove Ferry Terminal. The documents accompanying the draft of the EA included an eelgrass survey of the proposed ferry terminal site and adjacent areas. NMFS personnel also spoke directly with Ms. Delilah Brigham, USFS Fisheries Biologist, about the survey. Ms. Brigham indicated that eelgrass occurs in the vicinity proposed for relocation of the seaplane float. Areas containing eelgrass are designated as EFH and are also considered special aquatic sites under the Clean Water Act.

NMFS recommends that ADOT&PF conduct a thorough dive investigation of the benthos at the proposed seaplane facility site to map the location and extent of eelgrass and other EFH. In addition, ADOT&PF should prepare an EFH Assessment in accordance with 50 CFR 600.920 (e)(3).

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Katharine Miller at 907-586-7643.

Sincerely,


For James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: EPA Juneau, Chris Meade
ADF&G, Janet Schempf
ADEC, Jim Powell
ADOT, AADGC, ADNR, USFWS, Juneau

