



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

January 29, 2009

Jane Gendron, Environmental Coordinator
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
6860 Glacier Highway
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2506

RE: Petersburg Airport Runway Safety Area
Improvements, Supplemental EA, Scoping
Project Number 68207

Dear Ms. Gendron:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) January 2, 2009, letter requesting comments on proposed project changes that will be addressed in a supplemental environmental assessment (EA) for the Petersburg Airport Runway Safety Area Improvements, Project No. 68207. Your letter stated that the waste disposal area currently permitted for Phase I of this project has less capacity than originally calculated and additional disposal areas are needed. ADOT&PF is proposing five additional waste soil areas on the airport property to accommodate this need. The five additional waste disposal areas would impact 7.7 acres of wetlands.

Additional information was provided in a January 16, 2009, email message from Art Dunn to Jim Cariello. Mr. Dunn stated that ADOT had no plans to surface the waste areas and that ADOT plans to build shot-rock berms around waste areas B1 and B2, line the inside of the berms with geotextile fabric, and install a silt fence outside the waste area between the berms and the creek (HS-4). Creek HS-4 is a catalogued anadromous fish stream with coho salmon. There was no discussion in Mr. Dunn's email or in your January 2, 2009, letter about the distance between the waste fill area and creek HS-4.

NMFS recommends that the supplemental EA evaluate the impacts of the disposal areas on the adjacent creek stream flow and water quality. NMFS supports the planned measures to minimize water quality impacts. We recommend a buffer of at least 100 feet between the waste areas and creek HS-4. We also recommend an updated analysis of compensatory mitigation for Phase I and Phase II of the planned work.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Cindy Hartmann at 907-586-7585.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Mecum
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region



cc: ADF&G, Petersburg, Jim Cariello
USFWS, Juneau, Richard Enriquez
EPA, Juneau, Chris Meade
ADOT&PF, Art Dunn
ADOT&PF, Carl Schrader
FAA, Patricia Sullivan
ADNR, ACPM, Erin Allee
ACOE, Victor O. Ross

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Improvements Supplemental EA 1-28-09 cah.doc