

Public
Comment #1

C01

**ICICLE.**

December 22, 2008

Robert D. Mecum
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

RE: Bering Sea Chinook Salmon Bycatch Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (DEIS/RIR/IRFA)

Dear Mr. Mecum:

The purpose of this letter is to support the December 19, 2008 request, made jointly by the At-Sea Processors Association, Pacific Seafood Processors Association, and United Catcher Boats, for a forty-five (45) day extension to the public comment period associated with the above-referenced DEIS/RIR/IRFA (the "DEIS"). It is our understanding that this requested extension will not impede or otherwise put at risk the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's objective to implement a new Chinook salmon bycatch reduction plan in time for the 2011 A-season Bering Sea pollock fishery.

The timing of the comment period related to this DEIS is particularly challenging. As an inshore pollock processor and the owner of several pollock catcher vessels, we are fully engaged in year-end planning and preparation for the January 20 start of the 2009 pollock season. December and January are the months in which we hold our annual cooperative membership and captains' meetings, finalize our budgets, prepare our annual reports, and re-negotiate our cooperative and the intercooperative agreements. This year, we are also working on developing an incentive plan to save Chinook salmon in accordance with the Council's preferred preliminary alternative. Additionally, we are in the process of hiring and training crew members and processing employees, readying our vessels and facilities for the season, and working on marketing plans and sales strategies. All of this, in combination with the holiday season and necessary preparation for the December and February Council meetings, leaves little time to respond appropriately to a document as comprehensive as the DEIS.

In light of the significant impact that the proposed action may have on our business, and because an extension to the comment period will not delay the intended implementation of the Council's final action, we respectfully request that you extend the comment period by forty-five (45) days. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

ICICLE SEAFOODS, INC.

Patricia M. Hardina
General Counsel

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