



# *Alaska Ship Supply*

A DIVISION OF WESTERN PIONEER, INC.

January 19, 2009

Sent via US mail

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

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Chinook salmon bycatch limits in the Bering Sea pollock fishery (the DEIS)

Dear Mr. Mecum:

My name is Larry Soriano, president of Western Pioneer Inc. in Seattle. Our company provides a variety of goods and services to the various Bering Sea fishing fleets including: groceries, marine supplies, clothing, along with real estate and warehouse space in Dutch Harbor Alaska. Our company and its employees greatly depend on the health and well-being of the Bering Sea fishing fleets. We employ proximately 10 people in the Seattle area and 40 people in Dutch Harbor in our various operations.

I am writing to comment on the above referenced Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the analysis contained within it. The DEIS describes a number of alternative management measures designed to limit or control the amount of Chinook salmon that Bering Sea fishermen can take as bycatch in their pollock fishing operations. Once those limits or "caps" are reached, the fishermen must either stop fishing altogether for the remainder of the fishing year or at least for the remainder of the fishing season in which they've been operating.

Depending on the option chosen, the analysis suggests that such caps might result in unrealized pollock harvests worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the pollock fishing industry each year. Such losses would have significant impacts in terms of lost revenues, jobs and other economic activity-- not only for the fishing companies themselves, but also for companies such as ours that provide goods and services to the pollock industry.

Unfortunately, the analysis does not attempt to describe, much less quantify those impacts on companies such as Western Pioneer and Alaska Ship Supply. Without a full understanding of the potential costs that such measures might have on companies such as ours, the North Pacific Council will not have the information it needs to make an

informed decision as to what the appropriate balance should be between the benefits that the proposed caps might provide to salmon fishermen on the one hand and the costs to pollock fishermen and their related support industries on the other. For these reasons, it is imperative that the analysis be expanded to consider both the direct and indirect costs associated with each of the proposed alternatives before the Council takes final action on the proposed bycatch amendment.

If you have any questions about our company, the goods and services it provides to the Bering Sea pollock fleet, and/or the possible impacts on our business that would flow from premature closures of the fishery, please give me a call if the above number and I would be happy to explain further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lawrence J. Soriano". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Lawrence J. Soriano, PhD

President

Western Pioneer Inc./Alaska Ship Supply