



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

November 10, 2021

Dear Alaska Native Representative:

With this letter, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is acknowledging your public testimony at the October 2021 North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting. NMFS notes that there were two primary topics of immediate interest to Alaska Native communities, specifically salmon and halibut bycatch issues. NMFS is carefully monitoring these issues in the Council process and would like to discuss these topics with you. NMFS will hold two engagement opportunities, one on halibut bycatch and one on salmon bycatch issues. These will be virtual discussion sessions and will occur on:

- November 29th, 11-1 pm AKST, Halibut Bycatch
 - Connection Information: +1 386-753-7850 PIN: 860 125 148#
- January 11th, 11-1 pm AKST, Salmon Bycatch
 - Connection Information: +1 401-684-2886 PIN: 368 317 399#

We invite you to attend these engagement opportunities and to continue to participate in the Council process. The next Council meeting will be held virtually in December. The Council's schedule, agenda, and information on participation options may be found on the Council's website: <https://www.npfmc.org/upcoming-council-meetings/>. The Council is scheduled to take final action in December on a proposal for abundance-based management of halibut bycatch. Your participation in the November 29th engagement session on halibut bycatch will be informative and relevant to halibut bycatch management, and NMFS is particularly interested in information and insight on subsistence harvest and use of halibut.

If you have any questions about the above engagement sessions, please email Kelly Cates (Kelly.Cates@noaa.gov).

As a reminder, NMFS has special obligations to consult and coordinate with tribal governments and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations pursuant to Executive Order 13175 on "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments" and the Executive Memorandum of April 29, 1994, on "Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments." As a result of your tribal or ANCSA corporation affiliation, you have the opportunity to comment to NMFS at any time; however, comments submitted during the Council process of developing and analyzing alternatives for actions are very helpful and informative for the Council's decision making process. Additionally, a recent Presidential memorandum affirms the Federal government's commitment to including Tribal voices in policy deliberations that affect Tribal communities and recognizes that strong communication is fundamental to a



constructive relationship. More information can be found at the following website:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/26/memorandum-on-tribal-consultation-and-strengthening-nation-to-nation-relationships/>.

Please note that because the engagement sessions scheduled above will not follow the formal, structured process for consultation between NMFS and the Tribal governments of Alaska Native Tribes, the sessions are not considered consultations. NMFS is, however, committed to ensuring meaningful and timely consultation and communication on federal fisheries actions in Alaska with implications for Tribal communities. Tribal governments and ANCSA corporations may request consultation with NMFS, and more information on the consultation process and contact information is provided at the following website:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/consultations/tribal-consultations-alaska>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JB', with a small dot above the 'B'.

James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.
Administrator, Alaska Region