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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northwest Region
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 1
Seattle, WA 98115

SEP 27 2000

Mr. Jim Lone, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224
Portland, OR, 97201

Dear Jim:


This letter is to inform you that I am approving Amendment 14 to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan. I am approving the amendment package and its associated supporting analysis in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, and Regulatory Impact Review. The proposed rule to implement Amendment 14 will be published in the near future.

Amendment 14 designates marine and freshwater Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Pacific coast salmon. The Council's use of U.S. Geological Survey Hydrological Unit Code (HUC) watersheds as the basis for describing freshwater EFH will allow more precise identification of EFH in the future as HUC sub-watersheds are delineated. However, many non-fishing industries and others whose actions may be subject to EFH consultations have seen maps of the HUCs and incorrectly concluded that terrestrial areas are part of EFH. The Magnuson-Stevens Act limits EFH to waters and substrate. Accordingly, the Council should ensure that its EFH descriptions, particularly maps and other graphical depictions provided to the public, explicitly state that EFH is limited to aquatic areas and does not include dry land.

Amendment 14 also discusses the potential social and economic impacts on fishing communities involved in the ocean salmon fishery off the West Coast. NMFS recommends that the Council provide further social and economic analyses in the future, similar to the community profiles prepared since 1989 by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council for Washington and Oregon fishing communities involved in the Alaskan fisheries.

I appreciate the hard work undertaken by the Council in crafting the Amendment and its supporting documents, and I look forward to working with you to implement these management and regulatory changes. I believe that Amendment 14 provides a strong framework for the Council's coming fishery management decisions regarding salmon. NMFS looks forward to working with the Council to meet those challenges.

Sincerely,


Donna Darm
Acting Regional Administrator

