



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
West Coast Region  
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232

August 31, 2021

Via Electronic Mail

Mr. Charles A. Tracy, Executive Director  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384  
Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov

Dear Mr. Tracy:

By this letter, I am approving Amendment 21 to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The purpose of Amendment 21 is to set an annual Chinook salmon abundance threshold below which the Council and NMFS would implement specific management responses, through the annual ocean salmon management measures, to limit ocean salmon fishery impacts on the availability of Chinook salmon as prey for endangered Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW).

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prepared Amendment 21 to the FMP under the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and transmitted it to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on May 25, 2021, for approval by the Secretary of Commerce. A Notice of Availability for Amendment 21 was published in the *Federal Register* on June 2, 2021 (86 FR 29544). This *Federal Register* notice also notified the public of the availability of the draft environmental assessment (EA) for review and comment. The public comment period on Amendment 21 and the draft EA closed on August 2, 2021. During the public comment period for the Notice of Availability for Amendment 21, NMFS received 39,880 comments from individuals and organizations. The majority of comments received were largely in support of Amendment 21. Several of the comments raised concerns with or opposed Amendment 21 that the Chinook salmon abundance threshold for management action under Amendment 21 was too low. Some comments suggested actions that are outside the Council's authority to implement, such as addressing salmon predation by pinnipeds or removing dams. NMFS has addressed the themes raised in the comments expressing concerns or opposition to Amendment 21 in the Final EA, which can be found on the NOAA Fisheries website at [West Coast Salmon Harvest NEPA Documents](#). NMFS has evaluated Amendment 21 in a biological opinion, dated April 21, 2021, and determined that this action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the SRKW distinct population segment or destroy or adversely modify its designated critical habitat.



NMFS has determined that Amendment 21 is consistent with provisions of the MSA and other applicable laws. There are no implementing regulations with this FMP amendment.

NMFS appreciates the Council's close cooperation and assistance throughout the Amendment 21 process, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Council to ensure sustainable fisheries and resource conservation.

Sincerely,



Barry A. Thom  
Regional Administrator

cc: F/WCR – P. Mundy  
F/GCNW – S. Lynch