



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Philip Anderson, Chair | Charles A. Tracy, Executive Director

July 1, 2019

Ms. Kimberly D. Bose
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Docket Numbers CP17-494-000 and CP17-495-000

Dear Secretary Bose:

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is concerned that the Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Project and Pacific Connector Pipeline Project proposed for southern Oregon could have profoundly negative impacts on Council-managed fisheries and their essential fish habitat (EFH), including Chinook salmon, Oregon coast coho salmon, sardine, Pacific sand dabs, English sole, starry flounder, lingcod, and rockfishes, as well as their prey.

The Council notes that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC's) draft environmental impact statement, released on March 29, does not include analyses of how the proposed actions would affect many Council-managed species and their habitats cited above. For example, the Coos Bay estuary is designated as essential fish habitat for salmon, groundfish, and coastal pelagic species, and includes habitat areas of particular concern such as eel grass beds. The only mention of habitat effects are salmon spawning areas, and that analysis is very superficial. As such, the Council does not have sufficient information to comment, pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), on specific actions at this time. The Council therefore requests that FERC provide the Essential Fish Habitat Assessment to the Council coincident with its delivery to National Marine Fisheries Service.

As you know, the Council is one of eight Regional Fishery Management Councils established by the MSA, and recommends management actions for Federal fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California. The MSA includes provisions to identify, conserve, and enhance EFH for species regulated under a Federal fishery management plan. As defined in the MSA, the term "essential fish habitat" means those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.

Section 305(b)(3)(A) of the MSA authorizes the Council to comment on any Federal or state activity that may affect the habitat, including EFH, of a fishery resource under its authority. Furthermore, the Council is obligated under Section 305(b)(3)(B) to provide comments and recommendations for activities that the Council believes are likely to substantially affect the habitat of an anadromous fishery resource under its authority. Under 305(b)(4)(B), "Within 30

days after receiving a recommendation under subparagraph (A), a Federal agency shall provide a detailed response in writing to any Council commenting under paragraph (3) and the Secretary regarding the matter.”

A cursory review of materials suggests that impacts on Council-managed fisheries could result from dredging, construction of the terminal slip and access channel, development and maintenance of pipeline stream crossings and on slopes above streams, in-water blasting and new roads for pipeline construction, and other activities associated with the project.

Potential impacts include:

- Loss of intertidal and shallow subtidal habitats due to the dredging of navigation and access channels, and slip construction
- Loss of eelgrass beds
- Changes in hydrology, salinity intrusion, water temperature, and turbidity
- Removal of riparian vegetation near streams, wetlands, and waterways within the pipeline corridor, with associated impacts on nutrient input, shade, sediment load, turbidity, and erosion
- Loss of spawning and rearing habitat for salmonids
- Erosion and sediment loading in streams from pipeline construction on steep slopes

In addition, we are concerned that commercial and recreational fishing and commercial port delivery activities offshore of Coos Bay—one of the busiest fishing ports on the West Coast—may be impeded or halted in the security zone around LNG carrier vessels. This could lead to substantial impacts to Council-managed fisheries.

To summarize, we believe this project could alter estuarine and freshwater habitats with profound and lasting impacts on Council-managed species, their EFH, and their prey. We reiterate our request that FERC provide the EFH to the Council coincident with the delivery to National Marine Fisheries Service.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Tracy
Executive Director

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Cc: Council Members
Habitat Committee