CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY OF OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Federal regulations at 40 CFR 1502.16 require an EIS to compare the environmental impact of the alternatives considered in the analysis. Chapter 4 comprehensively assesses these impacts. However, the regulations identify classes of impacts that, while inherent in the analysis, are not explicitly discussed in Chapter 4. For that reason, these types of impacts are briefly discussed here, based on the information provided in Chapter 4.

Short-term uses versus long-term productivity. The proposed action does not directly affect the tradeoff between short-term use and long-term productivity of fish stocks since this is a function of setting harvest limits (OYs/ACLs), done under a separate periodic process. By requiring individual accountability and requiring comprehensive catch monitoring, the proposed action should make short-term use (catches) consistent with sustaining long-term productivity. However, this relationship ultimately depends on the correct specification of harvest levels.

Irreversible resource commitments. An irreversible commitment represents some permanent loss of an environmental attribute or service. The proposed action is likely to result in an irreversible commitment of some economic resources. Under rationalization, the groundfish trawl fleet is likely to consolidate, resulting in a smaller fleet size. Similarly, there is likely to be some consolidation of at-sea and shore-based processing facilities. The resulting impact of consolidation on communities is treated in detail in Section 4.14. Some of the surplus physical capital (e.g., vessels) may be put to other uses, for example in nongroundfish fisheries (Section 4.8). Other, less-mobile assets, such as shore-based processing plants, may not be redeployed.

Irretrievable resource commitments. A resource is irretrievably committed if its use is lost for time, but is not actually or practically lost permanently. The proposed action does not involve any direct irretrievable resource commitment, except for the fish that are harvested in the groundfish fishery.

Energy requirements and conservation potential of the alternatives. The proposed action may indirectly affect energy use through fleet consolidation. A smaller fleet, assuming that CPUE increases, would result in an overall reduction in vessel fuel use. However, there are various other factors that likely have a greater effect on overall energy use and efficient utilization. Changes in fuel prices, for example, could affect the level of fishing vessel operations independent of fleet consolidation.

Urban quality, historic resources, and the design of the built environment. The proposed action has no direct effect on these resources. However, impacts to communities related to consolidation could cumulatively affect private and public investment in coastal communities, including marine-related businesses and port-related infrastructure. These changes could also affect cultural and historic resources as fishing and fishing-dependent activities are supplanted, or simply disappear, changing the character of a coastal community. This concern is particularly true for those communities identified as vulnerable. See Section 4.14.

Possible conflicts between the proposed action and other plans and policies for the affected area. The proposed action is unlikely to substantially conflict with other plans and policies. The Council's other FMPs (salmon, CPS, and HMS) are most relevant to the proposed action in terms of the geographic area and resources covered. Section 4.8, nontrawl commercial harvesters, and Section 4.17.2.3, other fish resources, discuss the effects of the proposed action on other fisheries, which may be managed under Council FMPs.

Unavoidable adverse impacts. Impacts of the alternatives on the human environment are identified and evaluated in Chapter 4 of this EIS. The Executive Summary summarizes these impacts.

Mitigation. An EIS must discuss "means to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts" stemming from the proposed action (40 CFR 1502.16(h)), even if the adverse impacts are not by themselves significant. The mitigation measure incorporated into the proposed action and included in the preferred alternative (Alternative 4b) is the adaptive management provision, which annually sets aside up to 10 percent of the QPs in the shore-based IFQ fishery and up to 10 percent of the available aggregate harvest pounds for the Pacific whiting cooperative program. This harvest opportunity would then be allocated by the Council to meet specified objectives, including unforeseen impacts, such as geographic shifts in catch or landings, previously unidentified impacts to participants (e.g., processors), or unexpected barriers to new entry into the fishery.