



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

SEP 17 2004

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, we enclose for your review the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (FPEIS) for a West Coast Groundfish Bycatch Mitigation Program

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is responsible for developing FMPs that are consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable law. The Council's Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan includes goals, objectives, and management measures addressing bycatch. This FPEIS analyzes the Council's objectives for its bycatch mitigation program and evaluates alternative programs to achieve those objectives. Various bycatch mitigation tools are evaluated for effectiveness in reducing unwanted catches of marine species, potential for mitigating other effects on the marine environment, social and economic effects, administrative costs, and other potential impacts. Some alternatives would require more comprehensive future scientific observations of catch and bycatch. The Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service propose to establish the policies and program direction to minimize bycatch in the West Coast groundfish fisheries to the extent practicable, minimize the mortality of unavoidable bycatch, and ensure that bycatch is reported and monitored as required by law.

Additional copies of the FPEIS may be obtained from the National Marine Fisheries Service, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, Seattle, WA 98115. The document is also accessible through the Northwest Region's website: [http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1sustfish/groundfish/eis\\_efh/pseis/](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1sustfish/groundfish/eis_efh/pseis/).

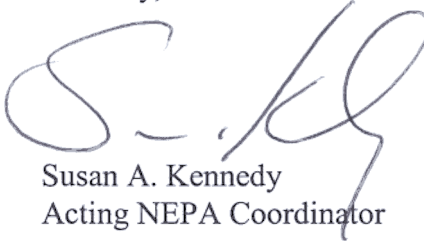
Comments or questions on this document submitted during the 30-day review period for the FEIS must be received by October 25, 2004. Written comments should be submitted by mail to D. Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest Region, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Seattle, WA 98115-0070, telephone: (206) 526-6150. Comments may be submitted by facsimile (fax) to (206) 526-6736. Electronic comments may be submitted by e-mail to [bycatcheis.nwr@noaa.gov](mailto:bycatcheis.nwr@noaa.gov); include in the comment subject line the following document identifier: Comment on Bycatch FPEIS. A copy of your comments should be submitted to me by mail to the NOAA Strategic Planning Office (PPI/SP), SSMC3, Room 15603, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910; by fax to 301-713-0585; or by e-mail to [nepa.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:nepa.comments@noaa.gov).

NMFS is not required to respond to comments received as a result of the issuance of the FPEIS. However, comments received will be reviewed and considered for their impact on the issuance.



of a record of decision (ROD). The ROD will be made available publicly following final agency action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Kennedy', written in a cursive style.

Susan A. Kennedy  
Acting NEPA Coordinator

**Enclosure**

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