



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

Northwest Mountain Region
Colorado, Idaho, Montana
Oregon, Utah, Washington
Wyoming

1601 Lind Avenue, SW
Renton, WA 98055-4099

June 15, 2000

VIA OVERNIGHT MAIL

Mr. Steve Landino, Branch Chief
Washington State Branch
National Marine Fisheries Service
510 Desmond Drive, S.E., Suite 103
Lacey, WA 98503

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
WESTERN WA OFFICE

JUN 16 2000

LACEY, WA
RECEIVED

RE: Final Biological Assessment - Seattle-Tacoma International
Airport

Dear Mr. Landino:

In a letter dated April 7, 2000, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) formally communicated to you its intent to initiate consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) concerning the effects of certain FAA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) actions relating to the development of the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (STIA) on listed and proposed species under your jurisdiction. Through this letter, the FAA now transmits to you a final biological assessment (FBA) evaluating the effects of relevant STIA development actions on such species and their designated critical habitats. The Corps has had several opportunities to provide comments on the BA when it was in draft form and the FBA is responsive to those comments.

Informal consultation with NMFS identified the threatened Puget Sound Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) as potentially occurring near the project. On February 16, 2000, NMFS designated critical habitat for this species. Analysis contained in the enclosed FBA concludes that Chinook salmon critical habitat is limited in the action area to marine and estuarine areas. No designated critical habitat for other listed or proposed species under NMFS' jurisdiction has been identified in the action area. Through this letter, we request your verification that the above list of species considered in the enclosed FBA accurately reflects the listed or proposed species, or designated or proposed critical habitat, which may occur in the action area.

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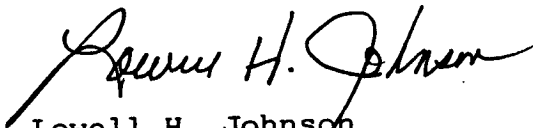
The enclosed FBA concludes, after a lengthy analysis, that relevant STIA development actions over which the FAA and Corps possesses discretionary involvement or control "may affect" chinook salmon, but are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat for these species.

While applicable ESA regulations may permit FAA, with NMFS' concurrence, to conclude this consultation informally (see 50 C.F.R. § 402.13(a)), the FAA wishes to engage in formal consultation with NMFS in this case to insure a thorough and complete record on this matter.

Section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) and associated implementing regulations provide that Federal agencies must consult with NMFS concerning all actions that may adversely affect designated essential fish habitat (EFH). The enclosed FBA analyzes the effects of FAA and Corps actions on designated pelagic and groundfish species EFH and concludes such actions will not adversely affect this habitat. Therefore, consultation under section 305(b) of the MSA is not required at this time.

My staff and I look forward to working closely with NMFS during the formal consultation process and will assist your staff during this process to insure the consultation proceeds in an efficient, expedited manner. Please contact Dennis Ossenkop at (425) 227-2611 if you have questions concerning this matter.

Sincerely,



Lowell H. Johnson
 Manager, Airports Division
 Northwest Mountain Region

cc (without enclosure):

Ms. Elizabeth Leavitt, Port of Seattle
 Mr. Geoff Mueller, Office of General Counsel, COE
 Ms. Melanie Rowland, NOAA Office of General Counsel

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