

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Chris Oliver
Executive Director

Chris

ESTIMATED TIME 6 HOURS

DATE: September 23, 2013

SUBJECT: SSL EIS Final Action

ACTION REQUIRED

Review Comment Analysis Report and select Preferred Alternative

BACKGROUND

In May, 2013 NMFS released a draft Environmental Impact Statement/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis for Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures for Groundfish Fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area. The analytical package is referred to as the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS provided an evaluation of the environmental, social, and economic effects of alternatives to the Steller sea lion protection measures for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area groundfish fisheries. The executive summary is attached as Item C-2(a).

Public comment on the Draft EIS was solicited and accepted until July 16, 2013. On September 20, 2013 NMFS released the draft Comment Analysis Report (CAR) which contained NMFS' formal responses to the summarized comments received during the comment period. The draft CAR also serves as an intermediate document that is intended to inform NMFS, the Council, and the public of the issues that NMFS feels needs to be addressed in the final EIS. The CAR will become chapter 12 of the final EIS.

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to select a Preferred Alternative for the final EIS. The Council may wish to endorse its preliminary preferred alternative selected in April 2013, select one of the other alternatives evaluated in the draft EIS, or devise a new Preferred Alternative for analysis for the final EIS.