



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99503



In Reply Refer to:
FWS/R7/AFES/MMM

June 24, 2025

Mr. Steve Giesbrecht,
Borough Manager
Petersburg Borough
12 South Nordic Drive, P.O. Box 329
Petersburg, AK 99833

Dear Mr. Giesbrecht:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has published in the *Federal Register* (90 FR 26486, June 23, 2025) proposed Incidental Take Regulations (ITR) under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA). If finalized, these ITRs would authorize the incidental take of small numbers of northern sea otters (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*) from the Southcentral Alaska, Southeast Alaska, and Southwest Alaska stocks. We are seeking public comment on these proposed ITRs for a 30-day period ending on July 23, 2025. We have also drafted a National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes the effects on the human environment of issuing these ITRs. The FWS is interested in any comments you may have on these proposed ITRs or the draft EA.

Under the MMPA, otherwise prohibited incidental taking by harassment of small numbers of marine mammals may be authorized by the FWS for a period of up to five years, provided certain findings are made. We received a request from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) for such an authorization, associated with their pile driving and marine construction activities at the USCG Moorings Seward, the USCG Moorings Sitka, and the USCG Base Kodiak. If finalized, the ITRs would authorize incidental harassment, including disturbance, to northern sea otters that could result from the USCG's activities. However, no lethal take would be authorized under the proposed ITRs.

The FWS's proposed ITRs were developed and based on our determinations that take from the activities will affect a small number of northern sea otters, will have a negligible impact on the Southcentral Alaska, Southeast Alaska, and Southwest Alaska stocks of northern sea otters, and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of northern sea otters for subsistence uses. In writing these proposed ITRs, we also identified mitigation measures that the USCG will be required to implement to ensure their work will have the least practicable adverse impact on northern sea otters and their habitat.

The proposed ITRs, including our analysis of effects, draft EA, and the supporting documents provided by the applicant are now available for public review and comment. To view these

documents or to provide the FWS with comment, visit www.regulations.gov and search for docket number: *FWS-R7-ES-2024-0195*. The FWS will accept comments on this proposed authorization until July 23, 2025.

We will review all comments prior to making a final determination. Should you have questions, please contact Regulatory Program Lead for Marine Mammals Management, Dr. Stephanie Burgess, via email at r7mmmregulatory@fws.gov or by phone at 1-800-362-5148.

Sincerely,

ALICE

GARRETT

Project Leader,

Marine Mammals Management

Digitally signed by
ALICE GARRETT
Date: 2025.06.24
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