



National Marine Fisheries Service
Northwest Fisheries Science Center
2725 Montlake Boulevard East
Seattle, Washington 98112-2097
Phone (206) 860-3200
FAX (206) 860-3217

SEND TO: Paul W. Krueger	FROM: Christine Holt
ATTENTION	DATE: 10/31/06
FAX NUMBER: 206-381-6442	PHONE NUMBER: 206-860-6795

Urgent Reply ASAP Please Comment Please Review For Your Information

Total Pages (including cover sheet): 3

Letter from Dr. Usha Varanasi, Science and Research Director of the Northwest Fisheries Science Center, regarding SR520.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
 Northwest Fisheries Science Center
 2725 Montlake Boulevard East
 Seattle, WA 98112-2097

October 31, 2006

Mr. Paul Krueger
 Environmental Manager
 SR 520 Project Office
 414 Olive Way, Suite 400
 Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Mr. Krueger:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center and NMFS predecessor agencies have been at the forefront of marine fisheries research in the Pacific Northwest for seven decades, and currently is the science lead for Pacific salmon and southern resident killer whale recovery efforts and the science to manage 89 groundfish fishery species. The Northwest Fisheries Science Center is also one of only three NOAA Centers of Excellence in Oceans and Human Health. The headquarters and principal offices of the Center are situated along Seattle's Portage Bay, near the University of Washington campus. This NOAA facility, commonly known as the Montlake Laboratory, houses more than 350 staff and 35 research laboratories, plus the Science Director's office and the directorates for each of five distinct science divisions. In addition, the facility directs the research efforts of its five field research stations located throughout Washington and Oregon. Unique features of the Montlake Laboratory include an innovative freshwater re-circulation system and aquaculture facility for full life-cycle research, sample handling and extraction laboratories for biotoxin and contaminants research, and extensive genetics and physiology laboratories certified for handling radioactive materials. Built in 1931, the Center's "West Building" was the first Federal fisheries building on the U.S. west coast.

F-001-001

The Northwest Fisheries Science Center has performed a preliminary assessment of the impacts of each of the various alternatives identified in your recent Draft Environmental Impact Statement of August 16, 2006. With the exception of the "No Action" alternative, the impacts of the various alternatives could be very severe leading to displacement and disruption, at the very minimum, of critical research activities conducted at the Montlake Laboratory. This includes the Center's important research on the Puget Sound ecosystem, including research on the impacts of toxic contaminants, in addition to Pacific salmon and killer whale recovery research. Impacts to the Center could also reflect in the loss of jobs currently in Washington State, as a result of transferring staff to other sites. Construction associated with the proposed alternatives would also have significant noise and vibration effects on the operations of the Center and all proposed



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Comment Summary:
 Property Acquisitions

Response:

See Section 6.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

F-001-001 alternatives would result in loss of laboratory property and some buildings. Some of these structures would need to be relocated on our Montlake property.

As the Northwest Fisheries Science Center works collaboratively with the University of Washington on many important science issues, and because of the current and historical scientific exchange between the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and the University of Washington, the Center intends to remain on its Montlake campus site. Close proximity to the University of Washington is critical for the success of Center programs and for the many students who work with our scientists at the Montlake Laboratory

Thank you for providing us an opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,



Usha Varanasi, Ph.D.
Science and Research Director
Northwest Fisheries Science Center

