

STATE OF ALASKA


FRANK H. MURKOWSKI
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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April 3, 2006

Mr. Jim Ayers, Vice President
OCEANA
175 South Franklin Street, Suite 418
Juneau, AK 99801

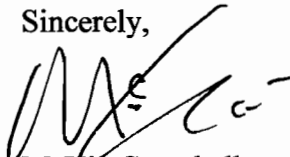

Dear Mr. Ayers:

Thank you for your letter of March 15, 2006, requesting closure of six coral-garden areas, that lie within state waters near the Aleutian Islands, to commercial fishing during the state-waters Pacific cod fishery. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) closed the areas you identified by emergency order on March 16, 2006.

The department and the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) had expected these closures to have been implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), but we were informed by NMFS that they were unable to close these areas in time for the 2006 season. Therefore, the department took immediate action to ensure these areas were protected, as had been agreed to in a motion approved by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and as intended by regulations of the BOF.

We agree the coral-garden closures are important habitat protection measures and appreciate your interest in the conservation of Alaska's marine resources.

Sincerely,


McKie Campbell
Commissioner

cc: Denby Lloyd, Director, Commercial Fisheries, ADF&G
Jim McCullough, Region IV Supervisor, Kodiak Commercial Fisheries, ADF&G