



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
PO Box 21668  
Juneau, AK 99802

March 2, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

**SUBJECT: Docket ID RIN 0648-AX50**

I am writing to express our firm's concerns regarding the imposition of the Cook Inlet beluga whale critical habitat designation by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). As one of the largest single purveyors of beverages to Alaska, The Odom Corporation is critically dependent upon the current reliable deep-sea maritime logistics service provided directly to our Anchorage hub. All our merchandisers stock to "just in time" needs. Our goods arrive in Anchorage to be distributed to a number of cities in Alaska, for example: Dutch Harbor, Nome, Barrow and Fairbanks. Delaying freight arriving into Anchorage could dramatically impinge upon trade, revenue, and the shelf price of the goods we sell to Alaskans throughout South Central, the rail belt corridor, the Aleutians, and Southwest Alaska.

The ships arriving into the Cook Inlet are already restricted by the tide. Slowing the speed would create further limitations. Freight which needs to connect via train to its final destination may well miss the train's departure; trucks waiting to transport the goods would have a longer standing time, very costly to the company.

Any regulations created to reduce the speed of the ships traveling through the Cook Inlet to Anchorage would most likely have a huge negative impact on Alaska. Vendors could be severely delayed in receiving new stock; this would lead to fewer customers which would eventually lead to less staff being employed. The total cost of this would ultimately fall to the citizens of Alaska. Higher costs to the distributing companies would need to be recouped from their customers - the local stores and residents.

I urge you to leave the passage way through the Cook Inlet as is, to maintain safe and reliable transits to and from the Port of Anchorage and to avoid unnecessary burdens and expense to the citizens and businesses of Alaska.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Odom  
Senior Executive Vice-President