

November 8, 2005

John V. O'Shea
Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1444 Eye Street, NW
Sixth Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Re: American Eel Draft Stock Assessment Document

Dear Mr. O'Shea:

The hydropower industry takes its role as stewards of our nation's natural resources very seriously. Consequently, the management of a species that is being considered for listing as an endangered species, in particular that of the American eel, is of great interest to the National Hydropower Association (NHA) and its member companies.

In fact, NHA has been actively involved with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (Commission) management of the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) since the development of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (American Eel Plan). Over the last several years, we have attended meetings and provided comments on these plans. Most recently, on June 10, NHA filed comments on the Commission's public information document (PID) for potential changes to the American Eel Plan.

We commend the Commission for its decision to include public participation as a key component in the development of the American Eel Plan. Specifically, the Commission's recently published Benchmark Stock Assessments - Data and Assessment Workshop & Peer Review Process (June 2005) includes guidelines for the stock assessment and peer review process that the American Eel Management Board/Technical Committee is currently conducting. On page 2 of this document, under Policies, it states that "Stakeholders shall be invited to attend ASMFC External Peer Reviews, but not as panel members and the External Peer Review Panel Chair will encourage public comment." NHA and its members look forward to participating in the processes that are an integral part of the changes that are being considered for the American Eel Plan.

To assist the Commission in obtaining public comment, NHA requests a copy of the draft stock assessment document prepared by the Technical Committee and the Stock Assessment Subcommittee for the Commission's American Eel Management Board. It is

our understanding that this document is currently under peer review. NHA seeks a copy of the draft assessment so that the Association and its members can provide constructive input to the Commission in a timely fashion.

As you know, NHA is the only national trade association committed exclusively to representing the interests of the U.S. hydropower industry, the largest provider of renewable energy in the United States. We represent over 61 percent of domestic, non-federal hydropower capacity and nearly 80,000 megawatts overall in North America. NHA's membership consists of more than 140 companies including public utilities, investor owned utilities, independent power producers, equipment manufacturers, engineering and environmental consultants, many of who are important stakeholders in the development of the stock assessment document.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. If you have any questions regarding our request, please feel free to contact me or Jeffrey Leahey at (202) 682-1700.

NHA looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Linda Church-Ciocci
Executive Director