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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 27, 2014

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Analyses Confirms that Alaska's Seafood is Safe from Fukushima Radiation

JUNEAU — The Alaska departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health and Social Services (DHSS) have received results from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on radiation testing of Alaska seafood. The results confirm information from federal, State and international agencies that seafood in the North Pacific and Alaska waters poses no radiation related health concerns to those who consume it.

The FDA is the lead U.S. agency in food safety. The agency has been monitoring radiation in both domestic and imported foods and determined that there have been no levels of Fukushima radiation in those foods that would pose a public health concern. However, Alaskans have insisted on Alaska-specific sampling and data. DEC and DHSS developed a sampling plan and coordinated with the FDA for them to analyze several Alaska fish species that are known to migrate from the western Pacific Ocean and that are harvested by commercial, recreational and subsistence fishers.

“We heard concerns from our neighbors, friends and other citizens throughout Alaska about the possible contamination of Alaska fish with the radiation releases from the Fukushima disaster,” DEC Environmental Health director Elaine Busse Floyd said. “We did not expect to find any problems with Alaska seafood based on federal monitoring of domestic and imported foods. However, we felt that it was important to assist the FDA by developing a sampling plan and obtaining Alaska fish to be tested. The data reassures us and other Alaskans for whom seafood is such a critical part of life in Alaska.”

The testing found no detections of the Fukushima-related radioisotopes Iodine-131, Cesium-134, or Cesium-137. There was some detection of background or naturally-occurring radiation. The results indicate no appreciable risk from any tested radionuclide in these fish. DEC and DHSS have posted the findings on their websites.

All samples were analyzed by standard techniques routinely used by the FDA to evaluate food safety. The fish samples were composites, containing tissue from several fish, and were collected using a statistical protocol. Samples were collected across the state from the Aleutian Islands/Bering Sea to Southeast Alaska.

DEC continues to collaborate with its partners, including DHSS, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Cook Inlet Keeper, North Slope Borough, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, FDA, and others to continue to compile and evaluate additional environmental sample data.

For more detailed information on the analyses, visit DEC's website:
<http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/Radiation/index.html>.

For more information on Alaska-specific information about Fukushima-related radiation exposure, visit DHSS's website:
<http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/eh/radiation/default.htm>.

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