PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT
CHANGE WORKSHEET

Agency/Subagency	OMB Control Number
DOC/NOAA/NMFS	0648-0511

	Enter only items that change Current record	New record
Agency form number (s)		
Annual reporting and recordkeeping hour burden		
Number of respondents		
Total annual responses		
Percent of these responses collected electronically	%	%
Total annual hours		
Difference		
Explanation of difference		
Program change Adjustment		
Annual reporting and recordkeeping cost burden (in thousands of dollars)		
Total annualized Capital/Startup costs		
Total annual costs (O&M)		
Total annualized cost requested		
Difference		
Explanation of difference		
Program change Adjustment		

Other changes**

This is a request to increase the number of Alaska households receiving a $5, rather than a $2, incentive, and to offer a $10 incentive to a portion of the non-Alaska household sample, with the goal of improving response rates. There would be no change to burden hours. See attached justification.

Signature of Senior Official or designee:	Date:	For OIRA Use

** This form cannot be used to extend an expiration date.

Worksheet Change Justification
Steller Sea Lion Protection Pilot Economic Survey

Background and Current Status

The formal pretest of the Steller sea lion protection economic survey began at the end of August 2005. In accordance with the approved ICR, the pretest is using a stratified random sample of U.S. households: 71 Alaska households and 353 non-Alaska households. An advance letter preceded the initial mailing of the survey. This advance letter outlined the objectives of the survey, stressed the importance of participation, and notified respondents when to expect the survey. The initial mailing was mailed approximately a week later. As described in the ICR, respondents either received a $2 or $5 incentive in the first mailing. The first follow-up contact was a postcard reminder, which was sent ten days after the first mailing. The second follow-up contact is a reminder telephone call intended to encourage response and collect information to analyze non-response behavior. Households that need a replacement survey are sent one. These follow-up phone interviews are currently in progress.

To date, the overall pretest response rate (35%) has been much lower than expected. This can be attributed in large part to low response rates for the non-Alaska sample stratum. As the table below shows, the response rates for non-Alaska households for both incentive levels are low. However, as expected, the response rate associated with the $5 incentive is statistically larger than the response rate for the $2 incentive at the 10% level ($p < 0.06$).[1] Still, the $5 incentive has only achieved a 35% response rate following 3 contacts (advance letter, initial mailing, and postcard reminder) and telephone contacts with over half of the non-respondents. As noted in the ICR supporting statement, the telephone contact is expected to boost response; however, it is unlikely that this contact will yield enough returned surveys to meet the target 60% level, which would require a response rate for this contact alone to exceed 60%.[2]

Table 1. Non-Alaska U.S. Household Sample Treatments[a]

	Incentive Amount	
	$2.00	$5.00
Total mailed	165	188
Undeliverables[b]	14	9
Returned	41	63
Response rate[c]	27.2%	35.2%

[a] As of 10/24/05
[b] This includes deceased persons
[c] Response rate = returned/(total mailed – undeliverables)

[1] That is, a one-tailed statistical test of the null hypothesis of equal response rates is rejected at the 10% level.
[2] To reach the targeted 205 returned surveys for all non-Alaska households associated with a 60% response, 101 households must return the survey. Assuming all 48 respondents who have been contacted and indicated they will be returning the survey actually return the survey, at least 64% of the 76 households (or 49 households) that have not been successfully contacted must return a completed survey. For the $5 treatment, in particular, a minimum response rate of 74% of the remaining 32 households (or 24 households) that have yet to be contacted must return surveys, in addition to the 21 that have promised to do so.

On the other hand, the results to date for the Alaska sample stratum largely conform to our expectations. The current overall Alaska response rate of 52% is slightly lower than what we would expect at this stage in the pretest. However, consistent with the survey methodology literature and the non-Alaska sample results, the $5 incentive resulted in a larger response rate (65%) relative to the $2 incentive (44%). This difference is statistically significant at the 10% level ($p < 0.06$). The 90% confidence intervals for the response rates of the $2 and $5 incentive treatments are [0.32, 0.57] and [0.49, 0.82], respectively. These results suggest the $2 incentive will not achieve a response rate exceeding 60%, but the $5 incentive will in all likelihood.

Table 2. Alaska U.S. Household Sample Treatments[a]

	Incentive Amount	
	$2.00	$5.00
Total mailed	47	24
Undeliverables[b]	4	1
Returned	18	15
Response rate[c]	44.2%	65.2%

[a] As of 10/24/05
[b] This includes deceased persons
[c] Response rate = returned/(total mailed – undeliverables)

One plausible explanation for the disparity in the magnitudes of response rates between the Alaska and non-Alaska groups is that Steller sea lion issues are less salient outside Alaska. As a result, interest in Steller sea lions by non-Alaskans may be low. This is supported by information collected in the telephone interview. In the interview, non-respondents are asked why they have not completed and returned the survey. The number one reason given by non-Alaskans was because they were not interested in Steller sea lions. Another major reason cited by non-respondents was the survey was a low priority for them. These explanations suggest that more needs to be done to encourage households to respond.

Proposed Changes

Two proposed changes are needed to assess the ability of the survey protocols to achieve desired response rates:

1. ***Addition of a new sample treatment of 125 Non-Alaska households that receive a $10 incentive.***

This change is necessary to assess whether a larger incentive will lead to an increase in the response rate to a desired level (i.e., targeting 60%). Evidence from the survey methodology literature supports the use of larger monetary pre-incentives to increase response rate. Yu and Cooper (1983) and Church (1993) conducted meta-analyses of the experimental survey literature on the effects of different incentives in mail surveys on response rates. Results from both studies suggest that response rates increase with increased incentive amounts.

To further increase response rates, a procedural change will be made with the $10 treatment that involves a modification of the advance letter and initial mailing. In the advance letter, a bolded reference to the fact that a token of appreciation in the amount of $10 will be included with the

survey will be inserted. Instead of paper clipping the $10 to the cover letter in the initial mailing, the incentive will be attached to a brightly-colored half-sheet that thanks the respondent for their time and cooperation. In this way, we hope to increase the number of households who open the survey, and ultimately, complete and return it.

Assuming 10% of the sample is undeliverable and a 60% response rate, the additional 68 responding households would account for 34 of the total 142.5 burden hours approved for this collection. No additional burden hours are requested, as the existing unused hours are sufficient to accommodate the additional treatment given current response rates and anticipated future returns.[3]

2. ***Addition of 28 households to the Alaska sample that receive the $5 incentive.***

An imbalance exists between the Alaskan households that received $2 and those that received $5. During implementation, the incentives were inadvertently randomized on the *total* sample instead of the stratified Alaska and non-Alaska samples. As a result, within the Alaska sample, only one-third of households received the $5 incentive (24 of 71 households). Although the evidence suggests the $5 incentive leads to a statistically significant marginal improvement in response rate relative to the $2 incentive in the Alaska sample, the 90% confidence interval overlaps a 50% response rate. The additional 28 households are desired to tighten the statistical bounds on the response rate associated with the $5 treatment.

Using the above undeliverable and response rate assumptions, we expect the resulting 15 responding households to contribute 7.5 hours to the overall burden hours for this collection. Since the existing hours are sufficient for accommodating these additional households, there will be no change to the burden hours.

References:

Church, Allan (1993). "Estimating the Effect of Incentives on Mail Survey Response Rates: A Meta-Analysis." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 57(1): 62-79.

Yu, Julie and Harris Cooper (1983). "A Quantitative Review of Research Design Effects on Response Rates to Questionnaires." *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(1): 36-44.

[3] In total, 71 of the allocated 142.5 burden hours have been used (2 hours from phone calls; 69 from returned surveys). The remaining 71.5 available hours will be split between further phone calls and follow-ups with the present samples and the changes described herein.