UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

OCT 12 2011

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental assessment entitled, "Environmental Assessment, University of Hawai'i (UH) Marine Center and Hawai'i Undersea Research Laboratory (HURL) Vessel Operations, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands."

LOCATION: Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, Hawai'i

SUMMARY: This environmental assessment evaluates the impacts of allowing the HURL program and the UH Marine Center to use the Pisces IV and Pisces V submersibles, the Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and the University of Hawaii research vessel KA'IMIKAI-O-KANALOA (KOK) as support platforms for permitted research activities in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM). An annual conservation and management permit would be issued to the UH Marine Center for operations of the research vessel KOK, and an annual research permit would be issued to HURL for operations of the Pisces submersibles, ROV, and voucher specimen collections each year for a five year period. Both permits would be issued by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Hawai'i, as co-trustees of the monument. The assessment finds that the individual and cumulative impacts of this action are not significant. Accordingly, the environmental assessment has resulted in a finding of no significant impact (FONSI).

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: T. 'Aulani Wilhelm, Superintendent
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
6600 Kalaniana'ole Highway, Suite 300
Honolulu, HI 96825
(808) 397-2660

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the FONSI including the supporting environmental assessment is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI, we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the responsible official named above.

Sincerely,

Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

Printed on Recycled Paper