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

APR 20 2010

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

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

TITLE: Environmental Assessment for Proposed Data Collection Analysis in Support of Single and Multispecies Stock Assessment in the Mid-Atlantic: Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program Near Shore Trawl Program (NEAMAP), NOAA Grant #NA10NMF4540018

LOCATION: The proposed project would conduct surveys in waters approximately 20ft. to 60ft. in depth between Cape Hatteras, NC and Montauk, NY, plus waters up to 120 ft. deep in Block Island Sound and Rhode Island Sound.

SUMMARY: The purpose of these surveys is to collect data on the living marine resources in the designated area for the NEAMAP Near Shore Trawl Program. The NEAMAP surveys are intended to be a compliment to the NEFSC bottom trawl surveys that are conducted from the Gulf of Maine to Cape Hatteras. A pilot survey was successfully conducted in the autumn of 2006. Full-scale regular surveys were conducted in the spring and fall of 2007-2009. This project will continue the twice-yearly sampling in these waters. In addition to providing assessment-related data for a number of managed species, it is anticipated that successful completion of this project will make a significant contribution to several of the specific research priorities and species of interest outlined in the Request for Proposals (black sea bass, scup, and bluefish).

The project is for two years and will be funded under NOAA Grant #NA10NMF4540018, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, Virginia. The Principal Investigators Christopher Bonzek and Robert Latour.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Nancy B. Thompson, Ph.D.
Science and Research Director
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

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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 finding of no significant impact (FONSI) including the supporting environmental assessment (EA) 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,

for Paul Doremeus
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure