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

NOV 23 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: Adoption of the NOAA Restoration Center's (NOAA RC) Targeted Supplemental Environmental Assessment on the *Parsons Slough Project, to support ARRA Grant Award # NA09NMF4630298*

LOCATION: Elkhorn Slough area at Monterey Bay, California

SUMMARY: The NOAA RC proposes to construct a partially submerged tidal barrier (sill) at the mouth of the Parsons Slough Channel. The purpose of the project is to reduce tidal scour in Parsons Slough and improve essential fish habitat for Coastal Pelagic and Pacific Coast Groundfish species. Construction of the sill requires vibratory and impact pile driving to install sheet pile and end-bearing piles into the seafloor. No impacts to ESA-listed marine mammals under NMFS' jurisdiction are expected to occur. However, non-ESA listed harbor seals may be experience Level B harassment due to noise from pile driving activities. Impacts are expected to be short term and include avoidance, masking, and interruption of behavioral activities (e.g., resting) at time of exposure. The National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) proposes to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to permit incidental take of small numbers of marine mammals pursuant to Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: James H. Lecky
Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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NMFS NEPA review process for the proposal to issue the IHA consisted of independent evaluation of the NOAA RC TSEA and a decision to adopt the document after determining that it adequately identified, considered and disclosed the environmental impacts of the proposed action, including the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to marine mammals. NMFS, therefore, will not prepare an independent EA. In addition, the NEPA review process led NMFS to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and NMFS has signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Therefore, NMFS will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. The NOAA RC IHA application and other documentation with relevant environmental information were made available to the public for comment during public review period for the proposed IHA, which was published in the Federal Register. NMFS has reviewed, considered and responded to public comment. Although NOAA is not soliciting additional 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 Doremus
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure