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

NOV 18 2011

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 on Effects of Issuing Marine Mammal Scientific Research Permit No. 15750

LOCATION: Coastal waters along the western shore of Cook Inlet, Alaska, between Bruin Bay and southern Chinitna Bay, excluding the area from Oil Bay to the eastern edge of Chinitna Bay, and including Iniskin, Illiamna, Chinitna and Kamishak Bays

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service issuance of Scientific Research Permit No. 15750, pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), authorizes taking by harassment of endangered Steller sea lions, Cook Inlet beluga whales, humpback whales, and fin whales, as well as seven species of marine mammals not listed under the ESA. This action will not have significant adverse impacts on the subject species or stocks of marine mammals or on the environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:
James H. Lecky
Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13821
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 427-8400

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,

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

Enclosure

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