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

FEB 28 2012

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. 15844

LOCATION: Southeast waters of Alaska especially Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

SUMMARY: The proposed action is issuance of a scientific research permit that would authorize vessel surveys, photographic identification, photography and videography, passive acoustics, collection of sloughed skin and feces, and export of parts of humpback whales, minke whales and killer whales. The permit would also authorize biopsy sampling of humpback whales and killer whales. The purpose of the research is to: (1) study the ecology, behavior and population status of all demographic groups in humpback, killer and minke whales, (2) continue one of the longest and most complete time-series data sets on humpback whale populations, and (3) document long-term trends in the abundance, spatial and temporal distribution, reproductive parameters and feeding behaviors of humpback, killer, and minke whales, which would enhance information-based resource management of these species in the waters of southeastern Alaska, primarily in and around Glacier Bay National Park and Reserve. Impacts from these activities would be short-term and minimal to individual animals and negligible to the species. A biological opinion concluded that the proposed action would not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the species and would not likely destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. The permit would be valid for five years from the date of issuance.

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RESPONSIBLE
OFFICIAL:

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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,

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure