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

FEB 16 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: 2012 Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Specifications Environmental Assessment (EA)

LOCATION: Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone

SUMMARY: This action establishes specifications and management measures for the 2012 fishing year for Atlantic mackerel and butterfish, and the 2012-2014 fishing years for *Illex* squid and longfin squid. This is the first year that the specifications are being recommended for Atlantic mackerel and butterfish under the provisions of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measure (ACL/AM) Omnibus Amendment. *Illex* squid and longfin squid are exempt from these requirements because they have a life cycle of less than 1 year. This is also the first year that the Council adopted a 3-year recommendation for specifications for both squid species, subject to annual review. Compared to 2011, this proposed action would reduce the mackerel quota by 13 percent, reduce the Illex quota by 2 percent, and increase the longfin quota by 13 percent. The butterfish quota and butterfish mortality cap would not change from the 2011 specifications.

This action also adjusts the closure threshold for the commercial mackerel fishery to 95 percent (from 90 percent), and allows the use of jigging gear to target longfin squid if the longfin squid fishery is closed due to the butterfish mortality cap. These specifications and management measures promote the utilization and conservation of the Atlantic mackerel, squid, and butterfish resource.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Daniel S. Morris
Acting Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
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The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), including the supporting environmental assessment, is enclosed for your information.

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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,

Pat Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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