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

DEC 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: 2013 Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Specifications Environmental Assessment (EA)

LOCATION: Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone

SUMMARY: This action includes the specifications and management measures for the 2013-2015 fishing years for Atlantic mackerel and for the 2013 fishing year for butterfish, as recommended by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Specifications for longfin squid and *Illex* squid were set for 3 years in 2012 (2012-2014) and therefore, will not be included in this year's specification rulemaking. The specifications also implement regulatory changes to the longfin squid fishery and the butterfish mortality cap to avoid 1-2 week closures at the end of a Trimester. The butterfish domestic annual harvest (DAH) being implemented in this action (2,570 mt) represents an increase of 1,698 mt over the 2012 DAH (872 mt). The butterfish mortality cap being implemented in this action (4,464 mt) represents a 1,299 mt increase over the current 2012 cap level (3,165 mt). Due to the increase in the proposed butterfish quota, this action also implements a variety of management measures for controlling effort in the directed butterfish fishery, including changes to trip limits, the closure threshold for the directed fishery, and post-closure trip limits. These specifications and management measures promote the utilization and conservation of the Atlantic mackerel, squid, and butterfish resource.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA, 01930
(978) 281-9315

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, 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,

for: Patricia A. Montanio
Assistant Administrator, PPI

Enclosure

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