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

NOV 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: Emergency Action under the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan: Closure of the Elephant Trunk Scallop Access Area-- RIN 0648-BC67

LOCATION: exclusive economic zone off the east coast

SUMMARY: This temporary rule implements emergency measures under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) to close the Elephant Trunk Area (ETA) to all scallop vessels for up to 180 days in order to protect the abundance of small scallops in the area. Closing the ETA will prevent fishing effort in this area, which could reduce long-term scallop biomass and optimum yield from the ETA, and could compromise the overall success of the scallop area rotational management program. The New England Fishery Management Council (Council), with the support of the scallop industry, requested that NMFS take this action quickly in order to minimize fishing effort in the ETA.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930
978-281-9300

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 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
NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure