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

APR - 8 2013

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: Marine Seismic Survey on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, April - June, 2013.

LOCATION: International waters offshore of the Azores, in the Atlantic Ocean

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization (Authorization) to the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory for the taking, by Level B harassment, of small numbers of marine mammals, incidental to conducting a marine geophysical (seismic) survey in the Atlantic Ocean, April - June, 2013.

NMFS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled, *Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to a Marine Geophysical Survey in the Atlantic Ocean, April - June, 2013*. The EA concludes that the impact of conducting the seismic survey on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge in the Atlantic Ocean may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior of small numbers of several species of marine mammals. Based on the analysis in the EA, NMFS determined that issuance of the Authorization will not result in any significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact to any element of the human environment and thus prepared a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). NMFS does not anticipate that take by injury (Level A harassment), serious injury, or death will occur; nor has NMFS authorized take by Level A harassment. Further, NMFS has determined that this activity will result in a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Helen M. Golde,
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National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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All beneficial and adverse impacts of the action have been addressed to reach the conclusion of no significant impacts. Accordingly, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for this action is not necessary. A copy of the FONSI and supporting EA is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this 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,

APR - 8 2013

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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