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

MAY 3 1 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: *Environmental Assessment on the Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to a Marine Geophysical Survey in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, June to July 2013*

LOCATION: Northeast Atlantic Ocean in International Waters and within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Spain (approximately 41.5 to 42.5° North and 11.5 to 17.5° West)

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) for the take, by Level B harassment only, of marine mammals during a marine geophysical (i.e., seismic) survey in the northeast Atlantic Ocean, June to July, 2013. NMFS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled *Environmental Assessment on the Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to a Marine Geophysical Survey in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, June to July 2013*, and prepared an independent Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In the EA, NMFS incorporated by reference the National Science Foundation's (NSF) *Environmental Analysis of a Marine Geophysical Survey by the R/V Marcus G. Langseth in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, June-July 2013*. NMFS has determined that the impact of conducting the marine seismic survey in International Waters and in the EEZ of Spain in the northeast Atlantic Ocean, west of Spain, may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior of small numbers of species or stocks of marine mammals. No injury, serious injury, or mortality is anticipated to result from this activity, nor is it authorized. NMFS has further determined that this activity will result in a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Donna S. Wieting, Director, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS

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The environmental review process including the analysis and determinations made during the IHA application and issuance process has 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 FONSI prepared by the NMFS, the supporting EA, and NSF document incorporated by the NMFS, are enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this 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

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