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

JUL 29 2013

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a supplemental environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Regulatory Amendment to Reopen an Additional Portion of the Georges Bank (GB) Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) Closed Area to the Harvest of Atlantic Surfclams and Ocean Quahogs (RIN 0648-BC21)

LOCATION: Exclusive economic zone off the East Coast of the United States

SUMMARY: The action reopens an additional portion of the existing GB PSP Closed Area. On August 31, 2012, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) published a rule in the Federal Register (77 FR 53164) that proposed to reopen a portion of the GB PSP Closed Area. On January 1, 2013, we published an interim final rule in the Federal Register (77 FR 75057) that reopened a portion of this area. However, due to the comments received on the proposed rule, the area that was reopened in the interim final rule was modified slightly from the proposed area in the proposed rule. The interim final rule included a 60-day comment period to allow for additional comments on the modified area. After reviewing comments received on the interim final rule, we plan to publish a final rule that will reopen the area as originally proposed. That is, in addition to the area that was reopened in the interim final rule, this final rule would reopen an additional 958 square miles of the GB PSP Closed Area.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 281-9200

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 supplemental environmental assessment (SEA), is enclosed for your information.

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Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed SEA/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
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure