



FEB 20 2014

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: Issuance of Regulations and a Letter of Authorization to the U.S. Air Force to Take Marine Mammals Incidental to Launches, Aircraft and Helicopter Operations, and Harbor Activities at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

LOCATION: Vandenberg Air Force Base, California and the Northern Channel Islands

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service proposes to promulgate regulations and issue subsequent Letters of Authorization (LOAs) to the U.S. Air Force for the take of marine mammals, incidental to the conduct of launch, aircraft, and helicopter operations from Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB) launch complexes and *Delta Mariner* operations, cargo unloading activities, and harbor maintenance dredging in support of the Delta IV/Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) launch activity on south VAFB for five years.

NMFS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled "Issuance of Regulations and a Letter of Authorization to the U.S. Air Force to Take Marine Mammals Incidental to Launches, Aircraft and Helicopter Operations, and Harbor Activities at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California," and prepared an independent Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has determined that the impact of the activities may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior and short-term displacement from haulout sites of five species of marine mammals. No injury or mortality is anticipated to result from this activity, nor is it authorized. Based on its review of the record, including the EA and FONSI, NMFS has determined that the promulgation of regulations and subsequent issuance of LOAs will not result in any significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact to any element of the human environment. NMFS has determined that this activity will result in a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of affected species or stocks for taking for subsistence uses.

RESPONSIBLE

OFFICIAL: Donna S. Wieting
Director
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13821
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The environmental review process 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 EA and FONSI prepared by NMFS is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA or 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