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

June 26, 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 Incidental Harassment Authorizations to BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. for the Take of Marine Mammals Incidental to Seismic and Geohazard Surveys in the Beaufort Sea, Alaska

LOCATION: Beaufort Sea, Alaska

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service proposes to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization (Authorization) to BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. (BP) under the MMPA for the incidental taking of small numbers of marine mammals, incidental to the conduct of a three-dimensional ocean bottom sensor seismic survey program in Prudhoe Bay in the Beaufort Sea, Alaska, from July through September 2014.

NMFS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled "Issuance of Incidental Harassment Authorizations to BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. for the Take of Marine Mammals Incidental to Seismic and Geohazard Surveys in the Beaufort Sea, Alaska," and prepared an independent Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). NMFS has determined that the impact of the activities may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior of small numbers of the affected marine mammal species. 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 issuance of an Authorization 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.

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RESPONSIBLE
OFFICIAL: Donna S. Wieting
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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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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,

for Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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