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

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 Incidental Harassment Authorizations to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to Open-water Marine and Seismic Surveys in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas

LOCATION: Beaufort Sea, Alaska

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to SAExploration, Inc., (SAE) for the taking, by Level B harassment, of small numbers of marine mammals incidental to open-water 3D ocean bottom Nodes seismic surveys in the Beaufort Sea. SAE's open-water seismic surveys are expected to occur within the time frame of August through October 2014. SAE requested a broad time range because the timing of the planned activities is dependent on ice, weather, and subsistence activities. NMFS proposes to issue an IHA with mitigation measures, as described in Alternative 2 of the Environmental Assessment. NMFS' Office of Protected Resources (OPR) has determined that the take of marine mammals incidental to SAE's seismic surveys would have negligible effects on the species and stocks of marine mammals in the action area.

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

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 finding of no significant impact (FONSI) including the supporting environmental assessment (EA) is enclosed for your information. Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed 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,

TRONVIG.KRISTEN.A.1365886012

Digitally signed by TRONVIG.KRISTEN.A.1365886012
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for Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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