Recommend Concurrence on EA for the Issuance of IHA to SAExploration to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to Conducting Open-Water Marine and Seismic Surveys

Steve Kokkinakis - NOAA Federal <steve.kokkinakis@noaa.gov> Mon, Aug 25, 2014 at 10:31 AM
To: Steve Kokkinakis - NOAA Federal <Steve.Kokkinakis@noaa.gov>

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From: **Steve Kokkinakis - NOAA Federal** <steve.kokkinakis@noaa.gov>
Date: Mon, Aug 25, 2014 at 9:09 AM
Subject: Recommend Concurrence on EA for the Issuance of IHA to SAExploration to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to Conducting Open-Water Marine and Seismic Surveys
To: Kristen Tronvig - NOAA Federal <kristen.tronvig@noaa.gov>
Cc: Pat Montanio - NOAA Federal <pat.montanio@noaa.gov>, Jay Nunenkamp - NOAA Federal <jay.nunenkamp@noaa.gov>, Jordan Creed - NOAA Affiliate <jordan.creed@noaa.gov>, Steve Kokkinakis - NOAA Federal <Steve.Kokkinakis@noaa.gov>

Kris,

This clearance is due today, **Monday, August 25, 2014**.

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.

My review of the FONSI resulted in some recommended comments which were fully addressed in the final FONSI. The EA supporting the original FONSI was concurred on in 2013, however the project was delayed in 2013 so NMFS never issued an IHA. Subsequently, this IHA now being ready for SAE's work this year (with revised FONSI for new work dates).

The effects of the Proposed Action on the quality of the human environment are not considered controversial. The document has been reviewed and approved by Sean Roberts, Attorney-Advisor for Fisheries and Protected Resources Section.

Please find attached the pdfs of the Concurrence Memo and Cover Letter for your digital signature, or let me know if you would prefer hard copies.

Thanks,
Steve

Year: FY14 (August 2014)
Lead on Plan: F/PR
Plan/Authorization: MMPA
Title: Environmental Assessment for the Issuance of Incidental Harassment Authorizations to Take

Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to Conducting Open-Water Marine and Seismic Surveys in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas
Grant: No
NEPA Document: EA
Status: Reviewed by Steve, Signed by Kris, sent to Shane Guan
FONSI signed: 8/20/2014
Summary: FONSI (on existing 2013 EA) for 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.

Steve Kokkinakis
Senior Advisor on NEPA Coordination and Compliance
Office of Program Planning and Integration
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
US Department of Commerce
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 240-533-9021
Fax: (301) 713-0585

Website: www.nepa.noaa.gov

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