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 an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the ExxonMobil Production Company to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to Conductor Pipe Installation Activities at the Harmony Platform in the Santa Barbara Channel offshore of California*

LOCATION: Harmony Platform is located in Santa Barbara Channel, situated between the Channel Islands and the east-west trending coastline of California. The Harmony Platform's geographical position is 34º 22' 35.096" North, 120º 10' 04.486" West.

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) for the take, by Level B harassment only, of marine mammals during conductor pipe installation activities at Harmony Platform in the Santa Barbara Channel off the coast of California. NMFS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled *Environmental Assessment on the Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the ExxonMobil Production Company to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to Conductor Pipe Installation Activities at the Harmony Platform in the Santa Barbara Channel offshore of California*, and prepared an independent Fining of No Significant Impact (FONSI). NMFS has determined that the impact of the conductor pipe installation activities using impact hammer pile-driving at the Harmony Platform in the Pacific Ocean, may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior of small numbers of species or stocks of marine mammals. No injury, serious injury, or mortality is anticipated to result from this activity, nor is it authorized. NMFS has further determined that this activity will result in a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks.

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 including the analysis and determinations made during the IHA application and issuance process has 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) prepared by the NMFS, the supporting EA, and NSF document incorporated by NMFS, are enclosed for your information.

Although NMFS is not soliciting comments on this 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