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, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Proposed Issuance of a Permit to Authorize the Culture and Harvest of a Managed Coral Reef Fish Species (*Seriola rivoliana*) in Federal Waters West of the Island of Hawaii, State of Hawaii

LOCATION: U.S. EEZ west of the Island of Hawaii

SUMMARY: An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposing to issue a Special Coral Reef Ecosystem Fishing Permit (SCREFP) to Kona Blue Water Farms (KBWF) for one year in accordance with the Hawaii Fishery Ecosystem Plan and consistent with implementing federal regulations (50 CFR §665.224) pertaining to management of coral reef ecosystem fisheries. The permit will authorize the culture and harvest of *Seriola rivoliana,* a Hawaii coral reef ecosystem management unit species (MUS), using a small, untethered brass-link mesh cage (CuPod) deployed in Federal waters (generally from 3-150 nautical miles (nm) offshore) west of the Island of Hawaii. The proposed activity will allow the applicant to test the feasibility of raising marine fish species using a new gear-type (towed, floating pen) in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (U.S. EEZ).

The environmental review process was conducted with public input. The proposed action is not expected to have large and adverse environmental impacts to native fishes, marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles, other marine species, or habitats. The analysis showed that approving and issuing the permit to culture and harvest *Seriola rivoliana* will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

Michael D. Tosatto
Regional Administrator
Pacific Islands Region
NOAA NMFS
1601 Kapiolani Blvd. 1110
Honolulu, HI 96814
Tel (808) 944-2200; Fax (808) 973-2941

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the 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 is enclosed for your information.

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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,

Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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