§ 970.103 Prohibited activities and restrictions.

(a) Prohibited activities and exceptions.

(i) Except as authorized under subpart C of this part, no United States citizen may engage in any exploration or commercial recovery unless authorized to do so under:

(A) A license or a permit issued pursuant to the Act and implementing regulations;

(B) A license, permit, or equivalent authorization issued by a reciprocating state; or

(C) An international agreement which is in force with respect to the United States.

(ii) The prohibitions of paragraph (a)(1) of this section will not apply to any of the following activities:

(A) Scientific research, including that concerning hard mineral resources;

(B) Mapping, or the taking of any geophysical, geochemical, oceanographic, or atmospheric measurements or random bottom samplings of the deep seabed, if such taking does not significantly alter the surface or subsurface of the deep seabed or significantly affect the environment;

(C) The design, construction, or testing of equipment and facilities which will or may be used for exploration or commercial recovery, if such design, construction or testing is conducted on shore, or does not involve the recovery of any but incidental hard mineral resources;

(D) The furnishing of machinery, products, supplies, services, or materials for any exploration or commercial recovery conducted under a license or permit issued under the Act and implementing regulations, a license or permit or equivalent authorization issued by a reciprocating state, or under an international agreement; and

(b) Any license issued under this subpart will be exclusive with respect to the holder thereof as against any other United States citizen or any citizen, national or governmental agency of, or any legal entity organized or existing under the laws of, any reciprocating state.

(c) A valid existing license will entitle the holder, if otherwise eligible under the provisions of the Act and implementing regulations, to a permit for commercial recovery from an area selected within the same area of the sea floor. Such a permit will recognize the right of the holder to recover hard mineral resources, and to own, transport, use, and sell hard mineral resources recovered, under the permit and in accordance with the requirements of the Act.