

Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs NMFS to allow, on request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region, if certain findings are made, and regulations are issued. Under the MMPA, the term "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill marine mammals.

Permission may be granted for periods up to 5 years if the Secretary of Commerce finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses. In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible methods of taking and other means effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds and areas of similar significance. The regulations must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities in the Gulf of Mexico were published on October 12, 1995 (60 FR 53139) and remain in effect until November 13, 2000.

#### Summary of Request

NMFS received a request for a letter of authorization on November 8, 1995, from the Murphy Exploration and Production Company. This letter requests a take by harassment of a small number of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to the above mentioned activity. Issuance of the letter of authorization is based on a finding that the total takings will have a negligible impact on the bottlenose and spotted dolphin stocks of the Gulf of Mexico.

Dated: November 27, 1995  
William W. Fox, Jr.,  
*Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
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BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

#### Modernization Transition Committee (MTC)

**ACTION:** Notice of Public Meeting.

**TIME AND DATE:** December 14, 1995 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** This meeting will take place at the Double Tree Hotel, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD, 20852.

**STATUS:** The meeting will be open to the public. There will be a public comment period from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Seating is available for approximately 50 people.

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:** This meeting will cover: Consultation on the FY 1997 National Implementation Plan (NIP) and proposed Consolidation Certifications for WSOs Helena, MT; Havre, MT; Detroit, MI; Kansas City, MO; Concordia, KS; Worcester, MA; Providence, RI; New York City, NY; Waco, TX; West Palm Beach, FL; Daytona Beach, FL; Knoxville, TX; and Beaumont/Port Arthur, TX.

**CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Mr. Nicholas Scheller, National Weather Service, Modernization Staff, 1325 East-West Highway, SSMC2, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Telephone: (301) 713-0454.

Dated: November 29, 1995.  
Nicholas R. Scheller,  
*Manager, National Implementation Staff.*  
[FR Doc. 95-29488 Filed 12-4-95; 8:45 am]  
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#### DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

##### **Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Plutonium Finishing Plant Stabilization, Hanford Site, Richland, Benton County, WA, Notice of Availability and Announcement of Public Hearing**

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy.  
**ACTION:** Notice of Availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy (DOE) announces the availability of the Plutonium Finishing Plant Stabilization Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0244-D). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and its implementing regulations. The continued presence of relatively large quantities of chemically reactive materials in their present form and location within the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) Facility poses an unacceptable long-term risk to workers, the public, and the environment. DOE has identified the need to expeditiously and safely reduce radiation exposure to workers and the risk to the public; reduce future resources to safely manage the Facility; and remove, stabilize, store, and manage plutonium, pending DOE's future use and disposition decisions.

**DATES:** DOE invites comments on the Draft PFP Stabilization EIS from all interested parties. Written comments or suggestions regarding the adequacy, accuracy, and completeness of the Draft EIS will be considered in preparing the Final EIS and should be submitted (postmarked) by January 16, 1996. Written comments received after that date will be considered to the degree practicable.

DOE will also hold one public hearing at which agencies, organizations, and the general public will be invited to present oral comments or suggestions on the Draft EIS. Location, date, and time for the public hearing is provided in the section of this notice entitled "PUBLIC HEARING." Written and oral comments will be given equal weight and will be considered in preparing the Final EIS. Requests for copies of the Draft EIS or questions concerning the project should be sent to Mr. Ben F. Burton, DOE, at the address listed in the section of this notice entitled **ADDRESSES**.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the Draft EIS should be submitted (postmarked) by January 16, 1996, for incorporation into the public hearing record. Oral comments will be accepted at the public hearing. Written comments, requests to speak at the hearing, or questions concerning the PFP EIS should be directed to: Mr. Ben F. Burton, U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office, Attn: PFP Stabilization EIS, P.O. Box 550, MSIN B1-42, Richland, Washington 99352, (509) 946-3609, 1-800-249-8181.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information on DOE's EIS process and other matters related to NEPA, please contact: Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Background, Purpose and Need for Agency Action**

In the late 1980s, a sudden halt in the production of weapons-grade plutonium froze the existing PFP Facility manufacturing pipeline in a state that was unsuited for long-term storage. On January 24, 1994, the Secretary of Energy commissioned a comprehensive assessment to identify and prioritize the environmental, safety, and health vulnerabilities that arise from the storage of plutonium in DOE facilities and determine which are the most dangerous and urgent. The DOE-wide assessment, commonly referred to as