

CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD

Sunshine Act Meeting; Notice

The United States Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board announces that it will convene a Public Meeting beginning at 10:00 a.m. local time on January 10, 2000 at the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (3rd floor), 625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. Topics to be discussed at the meeting will include:

1. Resignation of the Board Chairperson.
2. Interim Board Governance.
3. Proposed Federal Regulations regarding CSB Quorum, Voting Procedures and compliance with the Government Under the Sunshine Act.
4. Review and Adoption of CSB Mission Statement.
5. Major CSB Initiatives for remainder of FY 2000.
6. Review and Discussion of FY 2001 Budget Proposal.

The meeting will be open to the public. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board is a secure federal building requiring photo identification for public admission. For more information, please contact the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board's Office of External Relations, (202)-261-7600, or visit our website at: www.csb.gov.

Christopher W. Warner,
General Counsel.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 010600B]

Incidental Take of Marine Mammals; Taking of Ringed Seals Incidental to On-ice Seismic Activities

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of issuance of letters of authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, and with implementing regulations, notification is hereby given that letters of authorization to take ringed and bearded seals incidental to on-ice seismic operations in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska was issued on January 28, 2000,

to Western Geophysical and Kuupik/Fairweather Geophysical, both of Anchorage, AK.

DATES: These letters of authorization are effective from January 28, 2000, through May 31, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The applications and letters are available for review in the following offices: Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, and Western Alaska Field Office, NMFS, 701 C Street, Anchorage, AK 99513.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kenneth R. Hollingshead, NMFS, (301) 713-2055, ext 128 or Brad Smith, Western Alaska Field Office, NMFS, (907) 271-5006.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 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 by NMFS 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 NMFS 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 ringed and bearded seals incidental to on-ice seismic surveys were published on February 2, 1998 (63 FR 5277), and remain in effect until December 31, 2002.

Summary of Request

NMFS received requests for letters of authorization on September 23, and October 14, 1999, from Western Geophysical, and on October 15, 1999 from Kuupik/Fairweather. These letters request a take by harassment of a small number of ringed seals incidental to

conducting vibroseis surveys in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska.

Issuance of these letters of authorization are based on findings that the total takings by this activity will have a negligible impact on the ringed seal stocks of the Western Beaufort Sea and that the applicants have met the requirements contained in the implementing regulations, including monitoring and reporting requirements.

Dated: January 28, 2000.

Donald R. Knowles,

Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 00-2274 Filed 2-1-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 120999G]

National Plan for the Reduction of Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of extension of public comment period.

SUMMARY: A draft National Plan of Action for the Reduction of Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries (NPOA-Seabirds) was released for public comment on December 27, 1999, through a **Federal Register** notice. The public comment period listed in the previous notice expired on January 18, 2000. This notice extends this public comment period to February 7, 2000.

DATES: Written comments to the draft NPOA-Seabirds should be received no later than February 7, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the NPOA-Seabirds should be sent to David Kerstetter, NOAA - Fisheries/SF4, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or by fax to 301-713-2313. Comments will not be accepted via e-mail or internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Kerstetter, (301) 713-2276, ext. 107, or fax 301-713-2313.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The United States, through a collaborative effort with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is developing a NPOA-Seabirds pursuant to the endorsement of the International Plan of Action for the Reduction of Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries by the Food and Agriculture Organization of