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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. General Information

A. How can I get copies of this document and other related information?

1. *Docket:* All documents in the docket are listed in the www.regulations.gov index. Although listed in the index, some information is not publicly available, e.g., CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Certain other material, such as copyrighted material, will be publicly available only in hard copy. Publicly available docket materials are available either electronically in www.regulations.gov or in hard copy at the Water Docket, EPA/DC, EPA West, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Ave. NW., Washington, DC. The Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Public Reading Room is (202) 566-1744, and the telephone number for the Water Docket is (202) 566-2426. For additional information about EPA's public docket, visit EPA Docket Center homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/dockets.htm>.

II. Information on the Draft Field-Based Methods for Developing Aquatic Life Criteria for Specific Conductivity

EPA has developed a set of draft methods that states and authorized tribes may use to derive field-based ecoregional ambient aquatic life criteria for ionic mixtures measured as specific conductivity, a measurement of ionic concentration, in flowing waters. Elevated ionic concentration measured as specific conductivity has been shown to impact aquatic life in a range of freshwater resources. Different mixtures of ions that increase specific conductivity are associated with natural and anthropogenic sources.

EPA's draft methods provide flexible approaches for developing science-based conductivity criteria for flowing waters that reflect ecoregional- or state-specific factors. Once final, states and authorized tribes located in any region of the country may use the methods to develop field-based conductivity criteria for flowing waters. The document does not impose binding water quality criteria on any state, but instead provides methods to assist states and tribes that seek to develop such criteria for adoption into their water quality standards. The draft document provides

a scientific assessment of ecological effects and is not a regulation.

EPA's draft methods are based on effects observed in streams with different levels of specific conductivity and take into account natural variation in background specific conductivity and the aquatic species adapted to it. The draft document describes how to derive protective field-based aquatic life criteria for specific conductivity, including how to estimate a criterion continuous concentration for chronic exposures, how to estimate a maximum exposure concentration protective of acute toxicity, how to assess geographic applicability and potential confounding factors, and how to determine duration and frequency parameters.

EPA is also providing four case studies to illustrate how states and tribes may use the draft field-based methods to develop criteria in ecoregions with different background ionic concentrations measured as specific conductivity and demonstrate how to assess the applicability of criteria developed for one ecoregion to a different ecoregion. The case studies use field data to demonstrate how to apply the methods to derive example criteria for specific conductivity for flowing waters dominated by sulfate and bicarbonate salts but not for flowing waters dominated by chloride salts.

EPA typically relies on laboratory toxicity test data for surrogate species as defined in the Agency's *Guidelines for Deriving Numerical National Water Quality Criteria for the Protection of Aquatic Organisms and Their Uses* (1985) for aquatic life criteria development. The draft field-based methods for specific conductivity were adapted to be consistent with the Agency's traditional approach to derive aquatic life criteria. The draft field-based methods rely on geographically referenced, paired observations of specific conductivity and the presence and absence or abundance of freshwater benthic macroinvertebrate genera from wadeable perennial streams. An analysis of data for fish from a composite of case study ecoregions demonstrates that the example criteria based on macroinvertebrates are also protective of fish.

This document underwent an internal EPA review and two independent contractor-led external peer reviews.

III. Solicitation of Scientific Views

EPA is soliciting additional scientific views, data, and information regarding the science and technical approach used in the derivation of the draft field-based methods. EPA is also soliciting suggestions from the public for

additional ecoregional case studies for future consideration.

Dated: December 16, 2016.

Joel Beauvais,

Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Water.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[ER-FRL-9030-9]

Environmental Impact Statements; Notice of Availability

Responsible Agency: Office of Federal Activities, General Information (202) 564-7146 or <http://www.epa.gov/nepa>. Weekly receipt of Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) Filed 12/12/2016 Through 12/16/2016 Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.9.

Notice

Section 309(a) of the Clean Air Act requires that EPA make public its comments on EISs issued by other Federal agencies. EPA's comment letters on EISs are available at: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/eisdata.html>.

EIS No. 20160309, Final, BOEM, AK, Cook Inlet Planning Area Oil and Gas Lease Sale 244, Review Period Ends: 01/23/2017, Contact: Sharon Randall 907-334-5200

EIS No. 20160310, Final, FRA, NAT, NEC FUTURE: A Rail Investment Plan for the Northeast Corridor Tier 1, Review Period Ends: 01/31/2017, Contact: Rebecca Reyes-Alicea 212-668-2282

EIS No. 20160311, Draft, USACE, NE, Missouri River Recovery Management Plan, Comment Period Ends: 02/24/2017, Contact: Aaron Quinn 402-995-2669

Dated: December 20, 2016.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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