

cumulatively have the potential for significant impacts on the quality of the human environment and for which we have not identified any extraordinary circumstances that would preclude this categorical exclusion.

### Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that each Federal agency insure that any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. To ensure ESA compliance for the issuance of IHAs, NMFS consults internally whenever we propose to authorize take for endangered or threatened species.

However, no incidental take of ESA-listed species is authorized or expected to result from this activity. Therefore, NMFS has determined that formal consultation under section 7 of the ESA is not required for this action.

### Authorization

NMFS has issued an IHA to CDFW for restoration activities at the Seal Bend Restoration Area in Elkhorn Slough (Monterey County, CA) from September 16, 2022, through September 15, 2023. All previously described mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements from the initial 2021 IHA are incorporated.

Dated: September 9, 2022.

**Kimberly Damon-Randall,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Request for Public Comment on Report on Microfiber Pollution

**AGENCY:** National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

**ACTION:** Notice of request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NOAA's Marine Debris Program and Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Trash Free Waters Program, on behalf of the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee (IMDCC), is soliciting public comments regarding the draft *Report on Microfiber Pollution*. The Save Our Seas 2.0 Act of

2020 requires the IMDCC to complete a report on microfiber pollution. This Report will provide Congress with an overview of the microfiber pollution issue, while also outlining a path forward for Federal agencies, in partnership with other stakeholders, to address this problem.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before October 17, 2022, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be submitted by the following method: *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <https://www.regulations.gov>. Submit electronic comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal and search for Docket Number NOAA-NOS-2022-0061.

*Instructions:* All comments received are a part of the public record. All personal identifying information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields to remain anonymous).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ya'el Seid-Green, Executive Secretariat, IMDCC, Marine Debris Program; Phone 240-533-0399; Email [yael.seid-green@noaa.gov](mailto:yael.seid-green@noaa.gov) or visit the IMDCC website at <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/IMDCC>.

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

The IMDCC is a multi-agency body responsible for coordinating a comprehensive program of marine debris research and activities among Federal agencies, in cooperation and coordination with non-governmental organizations, industry, academia, States, Tribes, and other nations, as appropriate. Representatives meet to share information, assess and promote best management practices, and coordinate the Federal Government's efforts to address marine debris. The IMDCC was established in 2006 by the Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. 1954). The NOAA representative serves as the Chairperson of the Committee.

#### Why develop the report on microfiber pollution?

Section 132 of the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act of 2020 (Pub. L. 116-224) requires the IMDCC to complete a report on microfiber pollution that includes: (1) a definition of microfiber; (2) an assessment of the sources, prevalence, and causes of microfiber pollution; (3) a recommendation for a standardized methodology to measure and estimate the prevalence of microfiber pollution;

(4) recommendations for reducing microfiber pollution; and (5) a plan for how Federal agencies, in partnership with other stakeholders, can lead on opportunities to reduce microfiber pollution during the 5-year period beginning on the date of the Act's enactment. This Report will provide Congress with an overview of the microfiber pollution issue, while also outlining a path forward for Federal agencies, in partnership with other stakeholders, to address this problem.

Microfibers have been found almost everywhere that scientists look, including in surface waters and throughout the water column, sea ice, deep-sea and coastal sediments, terrestrial soils, and indoor and outdoor air and dust. These fibers are released from clothing, carpets, cigarette butts, and other fiber-based products and are one of the most pervasive types of microplastics found in many environmental compartments. However, additional research is needed to improve our understanding of microfiber sources, pathways, fates, and impacts so that effective mitigation strategies and prevention measures can be developed. Microfibers are a highly complex and diverse type of contaminant and research on the subject is particularly challenging due to a lack of standard definitions and research methods, which make comparisons across studies difficult. In the course of addressing the five requirements specified in Section 132 of the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act, this report also provides an in-depth review of these topics, recommendations for addressing research data gaps, and solutions to mitigate this source of pollution.

#### Summary of the Report on Microfiber Pollution

NOAA's Marine Debris Program and the EPA's Trash Free Waters Program co-led the development of this report on behalf of the IMDCC, with support from the consulting firm, Materevolve. The draft report is approximately 90 pages in length. Section 1 of the report provides an introduction to the report and microfiber pollution issue. Section 2 focuses on establishing a proposed definition of 'microfiber'. This section summarizes existing definitions from the environmental science, textile industry, and government sectors, and explains the issues that complicate efforts to define the term 'microfiber'. It proposes an initial definition of microfiber that can serve as a starting point for building consensus around a standard definition that could be adopted by the United States Government. Section 3 of the report

covers an assessment of the sources, pathways, and prevalence of microfiber pollution in the environment.

Environmental and human health impacts from microfiber pollution are also discussed. Section 4 covers the challenges and data gaps associated with creating standardized methodologies to measure and estimate the prevalence of microfiber pollution and recommendations for overcoming these challenges and data gaps. Section 5 provides an overview of current solutions for addressing the issue of microfiber pollution. Section 6 covers key research needs and recommendations. Section 7 contains a plan for how Federal agencies, in partnership with other stakeholders, can lead on opportunities to reduce microfiber pollution over a 5-year period. This plan was developed in collaboration with representatives from twelve Federal agencies.

#### How Comments Will Be Addressed

NOAA's Marine Debris Program and EPA's Trash Free Waters Program, on behalf of the IMDCC, invite comments, feedback, and recommendations on the *Report on Microfiber Pollution*, including Section 7, which contains a plan that outlines opportunities to reduce microfiber pollution. Following the comment period, the feedback provided will be reviewed and the report will be updated as necessary. An appendix will be added to the report describing how comments from the public comment period were incorporated into the report. The final report will be posted to <https://marinedebris.noaa.gov/our-work/IMDCC>.

#### Scott Lundgren,

Director, Office of Response and Restoration, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XC094

#### Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the CVOW-C Wind Energy Facility Offshore of Virginia

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application for Letter of Authorization; request for comments and information.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS has received a request from the Virginia Electric and Power Company, also known as Dominion Energy Virginia (Dominion Energy), for authorization to take small numbers of marine mammals incidental to the development of the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Commercial Project (CVOW-C) in Lease Area Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)-A-0483 off of Virginia over the course of 5 years beginning on March 4, 2024. Pursuant to regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing receipt of Dominion Energy's request for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals. NMFS invites the public to provide information, suggestions, and comments on Dominion Energy's application and request.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than October 17, 2022.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the applications should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Physical comments should be sent to 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and electronic comments should be sent to [ITP.Potlock@noaa.gov](mailto:ITP.Potlock@noaa.gov).

**Instructions:** NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kelsey Potlock, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. An electronic copy of Dominion Energy's application may be obtained online at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce (as delegated to NMFS) to allow, upon 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 either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An incidental take authorization shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth.

NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

The MMPA states that the term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines "harassment" as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance, which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

##### Summary of Request

On February 16, 2022, NMFS received application from Dominion Energy, requesting authorization to take marine mammals incidental to the development of CVOW-C in the BOEM Lease Area (OCS)-A-0483 Commercial Lease of Submerged Lands for Renewable Energy Development off of Virginia. In response to our comments, and following