

(rms)) in the Hess Deep area is estimated as 8,890. Of these, 8,532 are delphinids, and of these about 3,076 might be exposed to ≥ 170 dB. Both estimates are <0.1 percent of the eastern equatorial populations of these species.

As noted earlier in this document, NMFS believes that Level B harassment take levels would, for almost every affected stock, be significantly less than 1 percent of the stock and only a single stock has the potential of reaching a level of 2 percent for Level B harassment.

Effects on Pinnipeds

Very few if any pinnipeds are expected to be encountered in the Hess Deep area. Thus, a maximum of 20 pinnipeds in the Hess Deep area may be affected by the proposed seismic surveys. If pinnipeds are encountered, the proposed seismic activities would have, at most, a short-term effect on their behavior and no long-term impacts on individual seals or their populations. Responses of pinnipeds to acoustic disturbance are variable, but usually quite limited. Effects are expected to be limited to short-term and localized behavioral changes falling within the MMPA definition of Level B harassment.

Determinations

Based on the information contained in the L-DEO application, the NSF EA, the April 14, 2003, proposed authorization notice (68 FR 17909) and this document, NMFS has determined that conducting a seismic survey by the *Ewing* at the Hess Deep in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean in 2003 by L-DEO would result in the harassment of small numbers of marine mammals; would have no more than a negligible impact on the affected marine mammal species or stocks; and would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of stocks for subsistence uses. This activity will result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior by affected species of marine mammals. While behavioral modifications may be made by these species as a result of seismic survey activities, this behavioral change is expected to result in no more than a negligible impact on the affected species. Also, while the number of actual incidental harassment takes will depend on the distribution and abundance of marine mammals in the vicinity of the survey activity, the number of potential harassment takings is estimated to be small. In addition, no take by injury and/or death is anticipated, and the potential for temporary or permanent hearing impairment is low and will be avoided

through the incorporation of the mitigation measures mentioned in this document and required under the IHA. For these reasons therefore, NMFS has determined that the requirements of section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA have been met and the authorization can be issued.

Consultation

NMFS has concluded consultation under section 7 of the ESA on NMFS' issuance of an IHA to take small numbers of marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to conducting calibration measurements of its seismic array in the Hess Deep by L-DEO. The finding of that consultation was that this study is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of marine species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA. No critical habitat has been designated for these species in the equatorial Pacific Ocean; therefore, none will be affected. A conservation recommendation was made to ensure that the safety zone is clear of sea turtles prior to ramp up. This recommendation has been implemented through the IHA to L-DEO. A copy of the Biological Opinion is available upon request (see ADDRESSES).

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

On March 18, 2003, the NSF made a determination, based on information contained within its EA that implementation of the subject action is not a major Federal action having significant effects on the environment within the meaning of Executive Order 12114. NSF determined therefore, that an environmental impact statement would not be prepared. On April 14, 2003 (68 FR 17909), NMFS noted that the NSF had prepared an EA for the Hess Deep survey. In accordance with section 6.01 of the NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 (Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, May 20, 1999), NMFS has reviewed the information contained in NSF's EA and determined that the NSF EA accurately and completely describes the proposed action alternative, reasonable additional alternatives, and the potential impacts on marine mammals, endangered species, and other marine life that could be impacted by the preferred alternative and the other alternatives. As a result, NMFS has determined that it is not necessary to issue either a new EA or a Supplemental EA for the issuance of an IHA to L-DEO for this activity. Therefore, based on this review and analysis, NMFS is adopting the NSF EA

under NEPA. A copy of the NSF EA for this activity is available upon request (see ADDRESSES).

Authorization

NMFS has issued an IHA to take small numbers of marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to conducting a seismic survey by the *Ewing* in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean to L-DEO for a 1-year period, provided the mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements described in this document and the IHA are undertaken.

Dated: July 3, 2003.

Laurie K. Allen,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

[OMB Control No. 9000-0011]

Federal Acquisition Regulation; Information Collection; Preaward Survey Forms (Standard Forms 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, and 1408)

AGENCIES: Department of Defense (DOD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Notice of request for public comments regarding an extension to an existing OMB clearance (9000-0011).

SUMMARY: Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Secretariat will be submitting to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a request to review and approve an extension of a currently approved information collection requirement concerning preaward survey forms (Standard Forms 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, and 1408). This clearance currently expires October 31, 2003.

Public comments are particularly invited on: Whether this collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of functions of the FAR, and whether it will have practical utility; whether our estimate of the public burden of this collection of information is accurate, and based on valid assumptions and methodology; ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be

collected; and ways in which we can minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, through the use of appropriate technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

DATES: Submit comments on or before September 9, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the General Services Administration, FAR Secretariat (MVA), 1800 F Street, NW., Room 4035, Washington, DC 20405.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Victoria Moss, Acquisition Policy Division, GSA, (202) 501-4764.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Purpose

To protect the Government's interest and to ensure timely delivery of items of the requisite quality, contracting officers, prior to award, must make an affirmative determination that the prospective contractor is responsible, *i.e.*, capable of performing the contract. Before making such a determination, the contracting officer must have in his possession or must obtain information sufficient to satisfy himself that the prospective contractor (i) has adequate financial resources, or the ability to obtain such resources, (ii) is able to comply with required delivery schedule, (iii) has a satisfactory record of performance, (iv) has a satisfactory record of integrity, and (v) is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an award under appropriate laws and regulations. If such information is not in the contracting officer's possession, it is obtained through a preaward survey conducted by the contract administration office responsible for the plant and/or the geographic area in which the plant is located. The necessary data is collected by contract administration personnel from available data or through plant visits, phone calls, and correspondence and entered on Standard Forms 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, and 1408 in detail commensurate with the dollar value and complexity of the procurement. The information is used by Federal contracting officers to determine whether a prospective contractor is responsible. Due to improved technology, increased sharing of information among agencies and the increasing reliance on commercial items, for which preaward surveys are not required, the annual burden related to this clearance has been reduced.

B. Annual Reporting Burden

Respondents: 5,478.

Responses Per Respondent: 1.

Total Responses: 5,478.

Hours Per Response: 20.8.

Total Burden Hours: 113,942.

Obtaining Copies of Proposals:

Requesters may obtain a copy of the information collection documents from the General Services Administration, FAR Secretariat (MVA), 1800 F Street, NW., Room 4035, Washington, DC 20405, telephone (202) 501-4755. Please cite OMB Control No. 9000-0011, Preaward Survey Forms (Standard Forms 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, and 1408), in all correspondence.

Dated: July 8, 2003.

Ralph J. DeStefano,

Acting Director, Acquisition Policy Division.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

[OMB Control No. 9000-0047]

Federal Acquisition Regulation; Information Collection; Place of Performance

AGENCIES: Department of Defense (DOD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Notice of request for public comments regarding an extension to an existing OMB clearance (9000-0047).

SUMMARY: Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Secretariat will be submitting to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a request to review and approve an extension of a currently approved information collection requirement concerning place of performance. The clearance currently expires on October 31, 2003.

Public comments are particularly invited on: Whether this collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of functions of the FAR, and whether it will have practical utility; whether our estimate of the public burden of this collection of information is accurate, and based on valid assumptions and methodology; and ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected. When the On-Line Representation and Certifications Application (ORCA) becomes available,

contractors will be able to complete the provision electronically; however, because the data being collected could change for a specific solicitation, contractor's will still be required to submit place of performance information on an exception basis; that is, whenever the place of performance for a specific solicitation is different from the place of performance shown in ORCA.

DATES: Submit comments on or before September 9, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the General Services Administration, FAR Secretariat (MVA), 1800 F Street, NW., Room 4035, Washington, DC 20405

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gerald Zaffos, Acquisition Policy Division, GSA (202) 208-6091.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Purpose

The information relative to the place of performance and owner of plant or facility, if other than the prospective contractor, is a basic requirement when contracting for supplies or services (including construction). This information is instrumental in determining bidder responsibility, responsiveness, and price reasonableness. A prospective contractor must affirmatively demonstrate its responsibility. Hence, the Government must be apprised of this information prior to award. The contracting officer must know the place of performance and the owner of the plant or facility to (1) determine bidder responsibility; (2) determine price reasonableness; (3) conduct plant or source inspections; and (4) determine whether the prospective contractor is a manufacturer or a regular dealer. The information is used to determine the firm's eligibility for awards and to assure proper preparation of the contract.

B. Annual Reporting Burden

Respondents: 79,397.

Responses Per Respondent: 14.

Total Responses: 1,111,558.

Hours Per Response: .07.

Total Burden Hours: 77,810.

Obtaining Copies of Proposals:

Requesters may obtain a copy of the information collection documents from the General Services Administration, FAR Secretariat (MVA), Room 4035, 1800 F Street, NW., Washington, DC 20405, telephone (202) 501-4755. Please cite OMB Control No. 9000-0047, Place of Performance, in all correspondence.