

action, even those that occur outside of the jurisdiction of the MMPA.

#### Impact on Availability of Affected Species or Stock for Taking for Subsistence Uses

There are no relevant subsistence uses of marine mammals implicated by this action.

#### Endangered Species Act (ESA)

There are six marine mammal species listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act that may occur in the proposed survey area. Under section 7 of the ESA, NSF initiated formal consultation with NMFS on the proposed seismic survey. NMFS (*i.e.*, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources, Permits and Conservation Division) also consulted internally with NMFS on the proposed issuance of an Authorization under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA.

In October, 2015, the Endangered Species Act Interagency Cooperation Division issued a Biological Opinion with an Incidental Take Statement to us and to the NSF which concluded that the issuance of the Authorization and the conduct of the seismic survey were not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of fin, humpback, sei, and sperm whales and the Mediterranean monk seal. The Biological Opinion also concluded that the issuance of the Authorization and the conduct of the seismic survey would not affect designated critical habitat for these species.

#### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NSF has prepared an environmental analysis titled “*Environmental Analysis of a Marine Geophysical Survey by the R/V Marcus G. Langseth in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, November–December, 2015.*” NMFS has also prepared an environmental assessment (EA) titled, “Proposed Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to a Marine Geophysical Survey in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, November–December 2015,” which tiers off of NSF’s environmental analysis. NMFS and NSF provided relevant environmental information to the public through the notice for the proposed authorization (80 FR 53623, September 4, 2015) and considered public comments received prior to finalizing our EA and deciding whether or not to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). NMFS concluded that issuance of an Incidental

Harassment Authorization to Lamont-Doherty would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and prepared and issued FONSI in accordance with NEPA and NOAA Administrative Order 216–6. NMFS’ EA and FONSI for this activity are available upon request (see **ADDRESSES**).

#### Authorization

NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization to Lamont-Doherty for the take of marine mammals, incidental to conducting a marine seismic survey in the Mediterranean Sea November 19 through December 31, 2015.

Dated: October 29, 2015.

#### Perry F. Gayaldo,

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

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**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Availability of Seats for National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils

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

**ACTION:** Notice and request for applications.

**SUMMARY:** ONMS is seeking applications for vacant seats for five of its 13 national marine sanctuary advisory councils (advisory councils). Vacant seats, including positions (*i.e.*, primary member and alternate), for each of the advisory councils are listed in this notice under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**. Applicants are chosen based upon their particular expertise and experience in relation to the seat for which they are applying; community and professional affiliations; views regarding the protection and management of marine or Great Lake resources; and possibly the length of residence in the area affected by the sanctuary. Applicants who are chosen as members or alternates should expect to serve two- or three year terms, pursuant to the charter of the specific national marine sanctuary advisory council.

**DATES:** Applications are due by November 30, 2015.

**ADDRESSES:** Application kits are specific to each advisory council. As such, application kits must be obtained from

and returned to the council-specific addresses noted below.

- Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council: Carolyn Gibson, Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, 991 Marine Drive, The Presidio, San Francisco, CA 94129; (415) 561–6622 extension 306; email [Carolyn.Gibson@noaa.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Gibson@noaa.gov); or download application from <http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/sac.html>.

- Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council: Inouye Regional Center, ATTN: NOS/ONMS/Shannon Lyday, 1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176, Honolulu, HI 96818; (808) 725–5905; email [Shannon.Lyday@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannon.Lyday@noaa.gov); or download application from [http://hawaiiumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/council/council\\_app\\_accepting.html](http://hawaiiumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/council/council_app_accepting.html).

- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council: Nichole Rodriguez, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, 99 Pacific St. Building 455A, Monterey, CA; (831) 647–4206; email [Nichole.Rodriguez@noaa.gov](mailto:Nichole.Rodriguez@noaa.gov); or download application from <http://montereybay.noaa.gov/sac/2015/recruit15v2/151102covlet.html>.

- National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Advisory Council: Joseph Paulin, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center, P.O. Box 4318, Pago Pago, AS 96799 (Utulei, American Samoa); (684) 633–6500; email [Joseph.Paulin@noaa.gov](mailto:Joseph.Paulin@noaa.gov); or download application from <http://americansamoa.noaa.gov/about/samoa.html>.

- Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council: Karlyn Langjahr, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, 115 East Railroad Ave., Suite 101, Port Angeles, WA 98362; (360) 457–6622 extension 31; email [Karlyn.Langjahr@noaa.gov](mailto:Karlyn.Langjahr@noaa.gov); or download application from [http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/involved/sac/sac\\_welcome.html](http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/involved/sac/sac_welcome.html).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information on a particular national marine sanctuary advisory council, please contact the individual identified in the Addresses section of this notice.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** ONMS serves as the trustee for 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 170,000 square miles of ocean and Great Lakes waters from the Hawaiian Islands to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. National marine sanctuaries protect our Nation’s most vital coastal and marine natural and cultural resources, and through active research, management, and public engagement, sustains healthy

environments that are the foundation for thriving communities and stable economies. One of the many ways ONMS ensures public participation in the designation and management of national marine sanctuaries is through the formation of advisory councils. National marine sanctuary advisory councils are community-based advisory groups established to provide advice and recommendations to the superintendents of the national marine sanctuaries on issues including management, science, service, and stewardship; and to serve as liaisons between their constituents in the community and the sanctuary. Additional information on ONMS and its advisory councils can be found at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>. Information related to the purpose, policies and operational requirements for advisory councils can be found in the charter for a particular advisory council ([http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/ac/council\\_charters.html](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/ac/council_charters.html)) and the National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council Implementation Handbook (<http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/ac/acref.html>).

The following is a list of the vacant seats, including positions (*i.e.*, primary member or alternate), for each of the advisory councils currently seeking applications for members and alternates:

*Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council*: Public Youth (alternate).

*Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council*: Citizen-at-large (alternate); Education (alternate); Fishing (primary); Fishing (alternate); Hawai'i County (primary); Hawai'i County (alternate); Honolulu County (primary); Kaua'i County (primary); Kaua'i County (alternate); Lāna'i Island (alternate); Research (primary); Maui County (primary); Maui County (alternate); Moloka'i Island (alternate); Tourism (alternate); Whale Watching (primary); and Whale Watching (alternate).

*Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council*: At-Large (alternate).

*National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Advisory Council*: Business/Industry (primary).

*Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council*: Education (primary); Education (alternate); Fishing (primary); Fishing (alternate); Marine Resources Committee (primary); Marine Resources Committee (alternate); and Tourism/Economic Development (alternate).

**Authority**: 16 U.S.C. Sections 1431, *et seq.*

(Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog Number 11.429 Marine Sanctuary Program)

Dated: September 30, 2015.

**John Armor**,

*Acting Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD131

#### Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Construction of the Block Island Transmission System

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

**ACTION**: Notice; issuance of a revised incidental harassment authorization.

**SUMMARY**: Notice is hereby given that we have revised an incidental harassment authorization (IHA) issued to The Narragansett Electric Company, doing business as National Grid (TNEC), to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to construction of the Block Island Transmission System (BITS). The project has been delayed and the effective dates revised accordingly.

**DATES**: This authorization is now effective from October 30, 2015, through October 29, 2016.

**ADDRESSES**: A copy of this revised IHA is available by writing to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

An electronic copy of this revised IHA may be obtained by visiting the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**: John Fiorentino, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8477.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

On November 1, 2014, NMFS issued an IHA to Deepwater Wind Block Island Transmission, LLC (DWBIT) to take marine mammals, by Level B harassment, incidental to construction of the BITS, effective from November 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015 (79 FR 51314). On January 30, 2015, DWBIT

sold the BITS, in its entirety, to The Narragansett Electric Company, doing business as National Grid (TNEC). We issued a revised IHA reflecting this change in the name of the holder on June 3, 2015, with the dates of effectiveness of the IHA, and all mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements, remaining unchanged. The BITS, a bi-directional submarine transmission cable, will interconnect Block Island to TNEC's existing distribution system in Narragansett, Rhode Island. In-water work associated with the project was expected to be completed within the one-year timeframe of the IHA (effective dates originally November 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015). The following specific aspects of the planned activities are likely to result in the take of marine mammals: Vibratory pile driving and the use of dynamically positioned (DP) vessel thrusters. Take, by Level B Harassment only, of individuals of nine species (Atlantic white-sided dolphin, short-beaked common dolphin, harbor porpoise, minke whale, fin whale, humpback whale, North Atlantic right whale, gray seal, and harbor seal) is anticipated to result from the specified activity.

##### Summary of the Activity

TNEC plans to construct a bi-directional submarine transmission cable that will run from Block Island to the Rhode Island mainland. Construction of the marine portion of the BITS will involve three activities: Cable landfall construction on Block Island using a short-distance horizontal directional drill (HDD) from a temporary excavated trench box on Crescent Beach; cable landfall construction on Scarborough State Beach in Narragansett, Rhode Island using a long-distance HDD from a temporary offshore cofferdam; and installation of the submarine BITS cable. The BITS will interconnect Block Island to the existing Narragansett Electric Company National Grid distribution system on the Rhode Island mainland. Cable landfall construction may require the installation and removal of a temporary offshore cofferdam, which will involve vibratory pile driving. The generation of underwater noise from vibratory pile driving and the DP vessel thruster may result in the incidental take of small numbers of marine mammals.

##### Summary of the Revision

Construction activities have been delayed for the project due to a construction schedule dependent upon receipt of all environmental permits and licenses, procurement and completion