



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910  
THE DIRECTOR

FEB 12 2004

The Honorable Donald R. Schregardus  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
of the Navy (Environment)  
Department of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Schregardus

Thank you for your letter requesting the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to be a cooperating agency (as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1501.6)) in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will address the potential environmental impacts of the installation and operation of the East Coast Shallow Water Training Range (ECSWTR). The proposed ECSWTR will be used for Anti-Submarine Warfare training in the shallow water environment off either Norfolk, Virginia, or Onslow Bay, North Carolina.

We support the U.S. Navy's determination to do an EIS on this activity. NMFS agrees to be a fully cooperating agency in the preparation and review of this EIS and reserves the ability to review and comment on that document when it is released to the general public. In addition, NMFS is responsible for the processing of incidental take applications for Letters of Authorization (LOAs) under section 101(a)(5)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and will also be in formal consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act on the issuance of the proposed ECSWTR installation and operation. Provided our comments are satisfactorily addressed in the Navy's Administrative Record, NMFS is prepared to adopt the U.S. Navy's EIS when making its determination on the issuance of LOAs.

If you need any additional information, please contact Ms. Sarah Hagedorn, (301) 713-2322, ext 7, or Mr. Kenneth Hollingshead, (301) 713-2322, ext. 128.

Sincerely,

William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.



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