



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES
Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
115 East Railroad Avenue, Suite 301
Port Angeles, WA 98362-2925

October 6, 2015

Andrea Balla-Holden
U.S. Pacific Fleet
Environmental Readiness Division, NW Detachment
101 Tautog Circle
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

Dear Ms. Balla-Holden,

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) has received the Sanctuary Resource Statement (SRS) dated August 31, 2015, for the U.S. Navy's Northwest Training and Testing (NWTT) activities in OCNMS. In addition, OCNMS has received information, clarification and responses to questions via emails on September 25 and October 1, 2015. All of these documents have been provided to OCNMS in support of the consultation between the U.S. Navy, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and OCNMS pursuant to section 304(d) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) for activities to be undertaken in the NWTT area. OCNMS finds the SRS is now sufficient to assess potential effects of NWTT activities on sanctuary resources of OCNMS.

Section 304(d) of the NMSA requires federal agencies taking actions that are "likely to destroy, cause the loss of, or injure a sanctuary resource" to consult with OCNMS to determine whether there are reasonable and prudent alternatives to the proposed action that will protect sanctuary resources. The SRS provided by the U.S. Navy and NMFS estimates the numbers of marine mammals within the sanctuary that could be exposed, annually, to acoustic emissions associated with NWTT activities. The impacts of these exposures are predicted as numbers of marine mammals that could experience temporary and permanent threshold shifts and adverse behavioral responses, all of which constitute "injury" as defined by the NMSA. The NMSA provides OCNMS up to 45 days to respond with recommended alternatives that can be taken by the U.S. Navy and/or NMFS to reduce or eliminate injury to sanctuary resources. OCNMS considers the 45-day period to have started on October 1, 2015, when the final responses to our questions were received.

We are aware NMFS has set November 9 as the date for publication of its Record of Decision. We intend to accelerate our efforts and will work to provide you with recommended alternatives as quickly as possible, no later than November 13, 2015.



In the meantime, please contact me directly with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Carol Bernthal
Sanctuary Superintendent

Cc: Jolie Harrison, NMFS
John Fiorentio, NMFS

