UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

OCT 20 2009

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment on Issuance of Scientific Research Permit to Ronald Smolowitz (Permit File No. 14249) to Conduct Research on Protected Sea Turtles

LOCATION: Coastal waters of the northeastern United States

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue a scientific research permit for takes under the authority of the Endangered Species Act. Research authorized under Permit No. 14249 would evaluate modifications to scallop dredge gear that may reduce the probability of injurious sea turtle interactions with gear; study loggerhead sea turtle behavior; and collect biological and animal health information to help assess the loggerhead population and impact of anthropogenic activities on it. The preferred alternative would not not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

James H. Lecky
Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13821
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 713-2332

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI) including the supporting environmental assessment (EA) is enclosed for your information.

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Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the responsible official named above.

Sincerely,

for Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure