

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 30-124

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ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Establishment of FONSI Preparation Policy

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

Introduction. Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO 216-6), entitled, Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing The National Environmental Policy Act, NMFS is required to prepare a Finding of No Significant Environmental Impact (FONSI) whenever the supporting environmental assessment (EA) contains information and analyses demonstrating that a proposed action will not result in any significant environmental impact(s).

Objective. Whenever there is uncertainty as to whether a proposed NMFS action requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS), the NMFS responsible program manager (RPM) prepares an EA. Following the completion of the EA, an EIS must be prepared if the analysis within the EA demonstrates that the proposed action may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Alternatively, if the EA's analysis documents there will not be a significant impact on the quality of the human environment, a FONSI is prepared. The FONSI concludes NMFS's NEPA compliance responsibilities for the proposed action.

Authorities and Responsibilities. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities. The RPM must prepare a FONSI whenever an EA contains information and analysis supporting the conclusion that the analyzed action will not result in any significant environmental impact(s).

Measuring Effectiveness. The EA and FONSI for a proposed action are reviewed by NMFS officials who are responsible for the review and clearance of the action. Additionally, NOAA's NEPA Coordinator must review and concur with each NMFS EA and FONSI. Consequently, this review and clearance process serves as the mechanism for monitoring compliance with this directive.

References. This policy directive is supported by the references and glossary of terms listed in Attachment 1.

/s/ William T. Hogarth July 8, 2005

William T. Hogarth, Ph.D. Date

Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

References

NMFS Guidelines for the Preparation of a Finding of No Significant Impact

NOAA Administrative Order 216-6, Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, dated May 20, 1999

Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508)

Terms

Responsible Program Manager – The individual designated by the Assistant Administrator to initiate and coordinate the completion of the NEPA process within that individual's assigned functional area. See Section 2.02c of NOAA Administrative Order 216-6. Normally that individual is a NMFS Science Center Director, a Regional Administrator, or a Headquarters Office Director.