

Dated: December 30, 1998.

Richard W. Moreland,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Import Administration.

[FR Doc. 99-241 Filed 1-5-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

North American Free-Trade Agreement, Article 1904 NAFTA Panel Reviews; Request for Panel Review

AGENCY: NAFTA Secretariat, United States Section, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of First Request for Panel Review.

SUMMARY: On December 23, 1998, Allied Tube and Conduit Company, the Sawhill Tubular Division of Armco, Inc., and Wheatland Tube Company filed a First Request for Panel Review with the United States Section of the NAFTA Secretariat pursuant to Article 1904 of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Panel review was requested of the Final Scope Ruling on the antidumping order respecting Circular Welded Non-Alloy Steel Pipe and Tube from Mexico; Galvak, S.A. de C.V. This determination was made by the International Trade Administration and served on the Embassy of Mexico in Washington, D.C. on November 30, 1998. The NAFTA Secretariat has assigned File Number USA-MEX-98-1904-05 to this request.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James R. Holbein, United States Secretary, NAFTA Secretariat, Suite 2061, 14th and Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20230, (202) 482-5438.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Chapter 19 of the North American Free-Trade Agreement ("Agreement") establishes a mechanism to replace judicial review of final determinations in antidumping and countervailing duty cases involving imports from a NAFTA country with review by independent binational panels. When a Request for Panel Review is filed, a panel is established to act in place of national courts to review expeditiously the final determination to determine whether it conforms with the antidumping or countervailing duty law of the country that made the determination.

Under Article 1904 of the Agreement, which came into force on January 1, 1994, the Government of the United States, the Government of Canada and

the Government of Mexico established *Rules of Procedure for Article 1904 Binational Panel Reviews* ("Rules"). These Rules were published in the **Federal Register** on February 23, 1994 (59 FR 8686).

A first Request for Panel Review was filed with the U.S. Section of the NAFTA Secretariat, pursuant to Article 1904 of the Agreement, on December 23, 1998, requesting panel review of the final scope ruling described above.

The Rules provide that:

(a) A Party or interested person may challenge the final determination in whole or in part by filing a Complaint in accordance with Rule 39 within 30 days after the filing of the First Request for Panel Review (the deadline for filing a Complaint in January 22, 1999);

(b) A Party, investigating authority or interested person that does not file a Complaint but that intends to appear in support of any reviewable portion of the final determination may anticipate in the panel review by filing a Notice of Appearance in accordance with Rule 40 within 45 days after the filing of the first Request for Panel Review (the deadline for filing a Notice of Appearance is February 8, 1999); and

(c) The panel review shall be limited to the allegations for error of fact or law, including the jurisdiction of the investigating authority, that are set out in the Complaints filed in the panel review and the procedural and substantive defenses raised in the panel review.

Dated: December 28, 1998.

James R. Holbein,

United States Secretary, NAFTA Secretariat.

[FR Doc. 99-124 Filed 1-4-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 123098E]

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on Habitat Conservation Plans for the Operation of Three Hydroelectric Projects on the Mid-Columbia River in Washington

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to conduct public scoping meetings and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that NMFS intends to gather

information necessary to prepare an EIS related to a request by two Washington State public utility districts for incidental take permits (Permits) to take endangered and threatened species under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act (Act). The applicants are the Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County, Washington and the Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County, Washington (Districts). Applications are related to the operation of three hydroelectric projects on the mid-Columbia River in the state of Washington. The Districts are requesting Permits for two listed species, Upper Columbia spring chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and Upper Columbia steelhead (*O. mykiss*). The Districts also plan to seek coverage for other species not currently listed in the mid-Columbia region. These species are summer and fall chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*) and sockeye (*O. nerka*) salmon. Based on the requirements of the Act, the Districts have prepared Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) that include measures to minimize and mitigate any taking of species that may occur incidental to the operation of the hydroelectric projects.

In June 1998, NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Districts, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakima Indian Nation, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation and American Rivers, Inc. signed a declaration acknowledging the work to date on the HCP and their commitment to complete the regulatory actions necessary to issuing a permit.

DATES: Written comments from all interested parties must be received on or before February 5, 1999. Public scoping meetings will be held in Wenatchee and Brewster, WA. The Wenatchee meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m., January 20, 1999, at the Chelan Public Utility District Auditorium, 327 N. Wenatchee Ave. The Brewster meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on January 21, 1999, at the Senior Center, 109 South Bridge St.

ADDRESSES: Comments and requests for information should be sent to Jane Banyard, NMFS, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 103, Lacey, WA, 98503; telephone (360) 534-9338; facsimile (360) 753-9517. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the same address. Questions regarding the HCPs should be directed to Steve Landino, NMFS, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 103, Lacey, WA, 98503;

telephone (360) 753-6054; facsimile (360) 753-9517.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Districts own and manage three hydroelectric dams and associated facilities on the Columbia River. These dams are used to supply power to the citizens of Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan Counties, as well as other public and private utilities that serve over 7 million customers throughout the Pacific Northwest. Operation of the dams has the potential to impact species subject to protection under the Act. Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act contains provisions for issuing incidental take permits to non-federal landowners for the take of endangered and threatened species, provided the following criteria is met:

- (1) the taking will be incidental;
- (2) the applicant will, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize and mitigate the impact of such taking;
- (3) the applicant will ensure that adequate funding for the Plan will be provided;
- (4) the taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild; and
- (5) any other measures that the NMFS may require as being necessary or appropriate for the purposes of the Plan are met.

The Districts have initiated discussions with NMFS regarding the possibility of securing Permits for their hydroelectric project operations on the Mid-Columbia River, and they have prepared an HCP for each project. The Districts' intention in developing the HCPs was to establish a comprehensive approach to protect federally listed species and their habitats as affected by project operations. Activities proposed for coverage under the Permits include the following:

- (1) Operation and maintenance of the Rock Island Hydroelectric project, FERC No. 943, in accordance with its FERC license, and the Rock Island HCP.
- (2) Operation and maintenance of the Rocky Reach Hydroelectric project, FERC No. 2145, in accordance with its FERC license, and the Rocky Reach HCP.
- (3) Operation and maintenance of the Wells Hydroelectric project, FERC No. 2149, in accordance with its FERC license, and the Wells HCP.

NMFS will conduct an environmental review of the HCPs and prepare an EIS. The environmental review will analyze the proposals in the HCPs as well as a full range of reasonable alternatives and the associated impacts of each.

Comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties to ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action is identified. The review of this project will be conducted according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and policies and procedures of NMFS for compliance with those regulations.

After the environmental review is completed, NMFS will publish a notice of availability and a request for comment on the draft EIS and the HCPs.

Dated: December 31, 1998.

Kevin Collins,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 99-221 Filed 1-5-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 102998B]

Marine Mammals; Scientific Research Permit (PHF# 895-1450)

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

ACTION: Issuance of Permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Ms. Rachel Cartwright, 10 Greave, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 4PU, England, has been issued a permit to take North Pacific humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) for purposes of scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289);

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213 (562/980-4001); and

Protected Species Program Manager, Pacific Islands Area Office, 2570 Dole Street, Room 106, Honolulu, HI 9682-2396 (808/973-2987).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeannie Drevenak, 301/713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On April 15, 1998, notice was published in the

Federal Register (63 FR 18378) that a request for a scientific research permit to take North Pacific humpback whales had been submitted by the above-named individual. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered fish and wildlife (50 CFR parts 217-227).

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species which is the subject of this permit, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: December 23, 1998.

Ann D. Terbush,

Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 99-218 Filed 1-5-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Air Force

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection

AGENCY: Air Force Medical Operations Agency, DoD.

In compliance with Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Air Force Medical Operations Agency, Clinical Quality Management Division, AFMOA/SGOC, announces the proposed reinstatement and the initiation of a public information collection and seeks public comment on the provisions thereof. Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the burden of the proposed information collection; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the information collection on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.