

Unmitigable Adverse Impact Analysis and Determination

In order to issue an IHA, NMFS must find that the specified activity will not have an “unmitigable adverse impact” on the subsistence uses of the affected marine mammal species or stocks by Alaskan Natives. NMFS has defined “unmitigable adverse impact” in § 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that: (1) is likely to reduce the availability of the species to a level insufficient for a harvest to meet subsistence needs by (i) causing the marine mammals to abandon or avoid hunting areas, (ii) directly displacing subsistence users, or (iii) placing physical barriers between the marine mammals and the subsistence hunters; and, (2) cannot be sufficiently mitigated by other measures to increase the availability of marine mammals to allow subsistence needs to be met.

For marine mammals, Alaska Natives have traditionally harvested harbor seals and Steller sea lions in Sitka, Alaska. During the most recent ADF&G subsistence harvest report (2013), about 11 percent of Sitka households used subsistence-caught marine mammals, however, this is the most recent data available and there has not been a survey since 2013 (ADF&G, 2023).

The project is not likely to adversely impact the availability of any marine mammal species or stocks that are commonly used for subsistence purposes or impact subsistence harvest of marine mammals in the region because:

- There is no recent recorded subsistence harvest of marine mammals in the area;
- Construction activities are temporary and localized to the Gary Paxton Industrial Park, and industrial area;
- Construction will not take place during the herring spawning season when subsistence species are more active;
- Mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize disturbance of marine mammals in the action area; and
- The project will not result in significant changes to availability of subsistence resources.

Based on the description of the specified activity, the measures described to minimize adverse effects on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence purposes, and the planned mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS has determined that there will not be an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses from CBS’s planned activities.

Endangered Species Act

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA of 1973 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that each Federal agency insure that any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. To ensure ESA compliance for the issuance of IHAs, NMFS consults internally whenever we propose to authorize take for endangered or threatened species, in this case with the Alaska Regional Office (AKRO).

NMFS is authorizing take of western DPS of Steller sea lions and the Mexico DPS of humpback whales, which are listed under the ESA. The NMFS AKRO issued a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of the ESA on the issuance of an IHA to CBS under section 1010(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA by NMFS OPR. The biological opinion concluded that the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

To comply with the NEPA of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216–6A, NMFS must review our proposed action (*i.e.*, the issuance of an IHA) with respect to potential impacts on the human environment.

This action is consistent with categories of activities identified in Categorical Exclusion B4 (IHAs with no anticipated serious injury or mortality) of the Companion Manual for NAO 216–6A, which do not individually or cumulatively have the potential for significant impacts on the quality of the human environment and for which we have not identified any extraordinary circumstances that would preclude this categorical exclusion. Accordingly, NMFS has determined that the issuance of the IHA qualifies to be categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Authorization

NMFS has issued an IHA to CBS for the potential harassment of small numbers of nine marine mammal species incidental to the Gary Paxton Industrial Park Vessel Haulout project in Sitka, Alaska, that includes the previously explained mitigation, monitoring and reporting requirements.

Dated: November 18, 2024.

Kimberly Damon-Randall,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Marine and Coastal Area-Based Management Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the proposed schedule and agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Marine and Coastal Area-based Management Advisory Committee (MCAM). The members will discuss and provide advice on issues outlined under

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION below.

DATES: The meeting will be held on December 9, 2024, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held virtually on the Google Meets Platform. Registration is not required. Participants may join the meeting by computer or by phone:

Join by computer: meet.google.com/pfb-mrfv-mtv.

Join by phone: (US) +1 475–221–6328
PIN: 102 658 159#.

The MCAM website may be found at <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/ocean/marine-coastal-fac/meetings.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ellie Roberts, Program Analyst, NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, ellie.roberts@noaa.gov, (240) 533–0676.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As required by section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. 1009(a)(2), notice is hereby given of a meeting of the MCAM. The MCAM was established in 2022 to advise the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere on science-based approaches to area-based protection, conservation, restoration, and management in coastal and marine areas, including the Great Lakes. The MCAM charter is located online at <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/ocean/marine-coastal-fac/>.

I. Matters To Be Considered

The meeting time and agenda are subject to change. The meeting is

convened to discuss the following topics: area-based management in the U.S.; tracking conservation progress; Indigenous-led conservation and co-stewardship; and various administrative and organizational matters. For the most up-to-date meeting times, agenda, and meeting materials, refer to the MCAM website at (<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/ocean/marine-coastal-fac/meetings.html>).

II. Public Comment Instructions

The meeting will be open to public comment (check the meeting agenda on the MCAM website to confirm the time for oral public comments). Written comments should be received by the Designated Federal Official by December 4, 2024, to provide sufficient time for Committee review. Written comments received after December 4, 2024, will be distributed to the Committee, but may not be reviewed prior to the meeting date. To submit written comments, please email Ellie Roberts, ellie.roberts@noaa.gov. Written comments NOAA receives are considered part of the public record, and the entirety of the comment, including the name of the commenter, email address, attachments, and other supporting materials will be publicly accessible. Sensitive personally identifiable information, such as account numbers and Social Security numbers, should not be included with the comment. Do not submit comments that contain profanity, vulgarity, threats, or other inappropriate language.

III. Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ellie Roberts at ellie.roberts@noaa.gov, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

John Armor,

Designated Federal Official, Marine and Coastal Area-based Management Advisory Committee, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XE465]

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the Skagway Ore Terminal Redevelopment Project

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of renewal incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued a renewal incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to Municipality of Skagway (MOS) to incidentally harass marine mammals incidental to the terminal redevelopment project in Skagway, Alaska.

DATES: This renewal IHA is valid from the date of issuance through September 30, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the original application, Renewal request, and supporting documents (including NMFS **Federal Register** notices of the original proposed and final authorizations, and the previous IHA), as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jenna Harlacher, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The MMPA prohibits the “take” of marine mammals, with certain exceptions. Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce (as delegated to NMFS) to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are promulgated or, if the taking is limited to harassment, an IHA is issued.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for taking for subsistence uses (where relevant). Further, NMFS must prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other “means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact” on the affected species or stocks and their habitat, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance, and on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for certain subsistence uses (referred to here as “mitigation measures”). NMFS must also prescribe requirements pertaining to monitoring and reporting of such takings. The definition of key terms such as “take,” “harassment,” and “negligible impact” can be found in the MMPA and NMFS’s implementing regulations (see 16 U.S.C. 1362; 50 CFR 216.103).

NMFS’ regulations implementing the MMPA at 50 CFR 216.107(e) indicate that IHAs may be renewed for additional periods of time not to exceed 1 year for each reauthorization. In the notice of proposed IHA for the initial IHA, NMFS described the circumstances under which we would consider issuing a renewal for this activity, and requested public comment on a potential renewal under those circumstances. Specifically, on a case-by-case basis, NMFS may issue a one-time 1-year renewal IHA following notice to the public providing an additional 15 days for public comments when (1) up to another year of identical, or nearly identical, activities as described in the Detailed Description of Specified Activities section of the initial IHA issuance notice is planned or (2) the activities as described in the Description of the Specified Activities and Anticipated Impacts section of the initial IHA issuance notice would not be completed by the time the initial IHA expires and a renewal would allow for completion of the activities beyond that described in the **DATES** section of the notice of issuance of the initial IHA, provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. A request for renewal is received no later than 60 days prior to the needed renewal IHA effective date (recognizing that the renewal IHA expiration date cannot extend beyond 1 year from expiration of the initial IHA).

2. The request for renewal must include the following:

- An explanation that the activities to be conducted under the requested renewal IHA are identical to the