



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND
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NORFOLK VA 23551-2487

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Ser N46/064
September 14, 2018

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South Atlantic
Fishery Mgmt. Council

Mr. Gregg Waugh
Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Dr., Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Mr. Waugh:

The United States Department of the Navy (Navy), in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to analyze the potential effects from training and testing activities conducted within the Navy's Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Study Area.

The Study Area is in the western Atlantic Ocean and encompasses the waters along the east coast of North America and the Gulf of Mexico, portions of the Caribbean Sea, pierside locations and port transit channels, waters near civilian ports, and inland waters (e.g., lower Chesapeake Bay). The AFTT Study Area covers approximately 2.6 million square nautical miles of ocean space and includes designated Navy operating areas and special use airspace.

The Navy's mission is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas as mandated by federal law (Title 10 U.S. Code § 5062). The Chief of Naval Operations is charged with ensuring the readiness of the nation's naval forces and meets that directive, in part, by establishing and executing training programs and ensuring naval forces have access to training ranges, operating areas, and airspace needed to develop and maintain skills for the conduct of operations.

The Navy's Proposed Action is to conduct training and testing activities, which may include the use of active sonar and explosives, primarily within existing range complexes, operating areas, and testing ranges within the study area. For more information on the Navy's Proposed Action and alternatives, please see the project website at <http://www.aftteis.com>.

The following resource areas were analyzed in the Final EIS/OEIS: air quality, sediments and water quality, vegetation, invertebrates, habitats, fishes, marine mammals, reptiles, birds and bats, cultural resources, socioeconomic resources, and public health and safety.

The completion of the Final EIS/OEIS follows several years of research, analysis, and public involvement. The Navy accepted comments during a scoping period from November 2015 to January 2016, and held five public meetings for the Draft EIS/OEIS in July and August 2017. All of the Draft EIS/OEIS public meetings took place along the east coast and Gulf of Mexico. Public and agency comments received during the public review period for the Draft EIS/OEIS were considered and responded to in the Final EIS/OEIS. Changes between the Draft EIS/OEIS

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and the Final EIS/OEIS are discussed in the foreword and the Navy's responses to public comments are documented in Appendix H of the Final EIS/OEIS.

Regulations provide for a 30-day wait period after the Final EIS/OEIS is published before the Navy may take final action. The Final EIS/OEIS will be available to the public on September 14, 2018, on the project website at <http://www.aftteis.com> and at the public library locations listed on the project website. A CD-ROM of the Final EIS/OEIS can also be mailed upon request.

If you have questions, require additional information or would like to request a CD-ROM of the Final EIS/OEIS, please contact the AFTT EIS/OEIS project manager at:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic
Attn: Code EV22KP
6506 Hampton Blvd
Norfolk, VA 23508-1278

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Nashold
Director, Fleet Installations and Environment
and Deputy Chief of Staff