



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Whitlow Au, Ph.D.
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Dear Dr. Au:

Thank you once again for serving as a peer reviewer of the U.S. Navy's technical report (Auditory Weighting Functions and TTS/PTS Exposure Functions for Navy Phase 3 Acoustic Effects Analysis by J.J. Finneran) in early 2015.

While NOAA was working to finalize our Guidance for Assessing the Effects of Anthropogenic Sound on Marine Mammal Hearing: Underwater Acoustic Threshold Levels for Onset of Permanent and Temporary Threshold Shifts (Guidance), which directly incorporates the Navy's technical report, the Navy's methodology was further evaluated internally by NOAA, as well as externally by the Navy. As a result, several recommendations/modifications were suggested. After consideration of these recommendations, NOAA has updated sections of the Guidance to reflect these suggested changes and is now requesting your informal follow-up review of these specific revisions (see attached document containing updated sections of the Guidance).

General Directives:

Please provide comments on the scientific information and data contained within the updated sections of the Guidance (attached), related to the Navy's methodology (Appendix A from July 2015 NOAA Draft Guidance¹). Note: You are not asked to comment on any potential policy or legal implications of the application of the Guidance, or on the amount of uncertainty that is acceptable or the amount of precaution that should be embedded in any regulatory analysis of impacts.

- We request that you focus your review and subsequent comments on determining if these updates would substantially change any of the comments provided during your first review (i.e., we are not asking that you re-review the Navy's methodology).
- If anything has changed that would create a conflict of interest and preclude your review of the updated sections of the Technical Guidance, please let us know.

¹ <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/acoustics/draft%20acoustic%20guidance%20July%202015.pdf>



- Please note that concurrent to your review, NOAA is conducting a 14-day public comment period on the same updated sections of the Guidance.
- Please provide your electronic comments no later than 14-days from receipt of this letter and updated sections of the Guidance. However, if you identify major concerns, please let us know as soon as possible.
- If you are unwilling or unable to complete this informal peer review, please let us know as soon as possible.

NMFS appreciates your continued willingness to help with this important effort to create national guidance based on the best available science. If there are technical questions, please feel free to contact Amy Scholik-Schlomer, at (301) 427-8449 (Amy.Scholik@noaa.gov). Questions on the overall acoustic guidance process can be directed to me at (301) 427-8402 (Nicole.Leboeuf@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,



Nicole R. Le Boeuf
Division Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea
Turtle Conservation Division
NMFS Office of Protected Resources

Attachment:

1. Updated Sections: NOAA Draft Guidance for Assessing the Effects of Anthropogenic Sound on Marine Mammal Hearing