

(e.g., previously wounded animal, carcass with moderate to advanced decomposition, or scavenger damage), USCG shall report the incident to the Supervisor of the Incidental Take Program, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the West Coast Regional Stranding Coordinators, within 24 hours of the discovery. WSF shall provide photographs or video footage (if available) or other documentation of the stranded animal sighting to NMFS and the Marine Mammal Stranding Network. USCG can continue its operations under such a case.

(9.) This Authorization may be modified, suspended or withdrawn if the holder fails to abide by the conditions prescribed herein or if the authorized taking is having more than a negligible impact on the species or stock of affected marine mammals, or if there is an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stocks for subsistence uses.

(10.) A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of each contractor who performs the waterfront repair work at USCG Station Monterey.

Request for Public Comments

NMFS requests comment on our analysis, the draft authorization, and any other aspect of the Notice of Proposed IHA for USCG. Please include with your comments any supporting data or literature citations to help inform our final decision on USCG request for an MMPA authorization.

Dated: March 5, 2014.

Donna S. Wieting,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XC957

Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Construction at Bremerton Ferry Terminal

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of an incidental take authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an

Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to take, by harassment, small numbers of six species of marine mammals incidental to vibratory pile driving and pile removal activities at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal in Washington State between October 2014 and September 2015.

DATES: Effective September 1, 2014, through August 31, 2015.

ADDRESSES: A copy of the application containing a list of the references used in this document, NMFS' Environmental Assessment (EA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and the IHA may be obtained by telephoning the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) or visiting the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>.

Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce 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 issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as "... an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival."

Summary of Request

On August 14, 2012, WSF submitted a request to NOAA requesting an IHA for the harassment of small numbers of six marine mammal species incidental to construction associated with the replacement of wingwalls at the Bremerton ferry terminal in Washington State. On June 12, 2013, NMFS issued an IHA to WSF for the take of marine mammals incidental to the proposed construction activities (78 FR 36527; June 18, 2013). The IHA covers the duration between September 1, 2013, and August 31, 2014. However, due to a funding shortfall, WSF was unable to conduct the proposed construction activities during the IHA period. Subsequently, on September 30, 2013, WSF submitted another IHA application for the same actions that are analyzed previously and plans to conduct wingwalls replacement work at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal during fall, 2014. The action discussed in this document is based on WSDOT's September 30, 2013, IHA application.

In the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA, the valid date for the proposed IHA was incorrectly stated as from October 1, 2014, through September 30, 2015. These dates are corrected to September 1, 2014, through August 31, 2015, in the final IHA. No other change has been made to the proposed activities from what was described in the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA.

Description of the Specified Activity

A detailed description of the WSDOT's wingwalls replacement work at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal is provided in the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA (78 FR 72655; December 3, 2013). Since that time, no changes have been made to the wingwalls replacement project at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal. Please refer to that **Federal Register** notice for the description of the specific activity.

Comments and Responses

A notice of NMFS' proposal to issue an IHA to WSDOT was published in the **Federal Register** on December 3, 2013 (78 FR 72655). That notice described, in detail, WSDOT's activity, the marine mammal species that may be affected by the activity, and the anticipated effects on marine mammals. During the 30-day public comment period, NMFS received comments from the Marine Mammal Commission (Commission). The Commission recommends NMFS issue the IHA to WSDOT, subject to inclusion of the proposed mitigation and monitoring measures described in the

proposed IHA. NMFS agrees with the Commission's recommendation and has to issued the IHA with mitigation and monitoring measures described below. No other comment letters were received on the proposed action.

Description of Marine Mammals in the Area of the Specified Activity

The marine mammal species under NMFS jurisdiction most likely to occur in the construction area include Pacific harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina richardsi*), California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*), Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*), killer whale (*Orcinus orca*), gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*), and humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*).

General information on the marine mammal species found in the vicinity of the project area in Washington waters can be found in Caretta *et al.* (2012), which is available at the following URL: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/sars/po2012.pdf>. Specific information concerning these species in the vicinity of the action area is provided in the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA and in WSDOT's IHA application. That information has not changed and therefore, it is not repeated here.

Potential Effects of the Specified Activity on Marine Mammals

The effects of underwater noise from in-water vibratory pile driving and pile removal associated with the construction activities at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal has the potential to result in Level B (behavioral) harassment of marine mammal species and stocks in the vicinity of the action area. The Notice of Proposed IHA included a discussion of the effects of anthropogenic noise on marine mammals, which is not repeated here. No instances of hearing threshold shifts, injury, serious injury, or mortality are expected as a result of WSDOT's activities given the strong likelihood that marine mammals would avoid the immediate vicinity of the pile driving area.

Potential Effects on Marine Mammal Habitat

The primary potential impacts to marine mammals and other marine species are associated with elevated sound levels, but the project may also result in additional effects to marine mammal prey species and short-term local water turbidity caused by in-water construction due to pile removal and pile driving. These potential effects are discussed in detail in the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA and are not repeated here.

Potential Impacts on Availability of Affected Species or Stocks for Taking for Subsistence Uses

There are no relevant subsistence uses of marine mammals implicated by this action. Therefore, NMFS has determined that the total taking of affected species or stocks would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for subsistence purposes.

Mitigation Measures

In order to issue an incidental take authorization under Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA, NMFS must prescribe, where applicable, the permissible methods of taking pursuant to such activity, and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on such species or stock and its habitat, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance, and on the availability of such species or stock for taking for certain subsistence uses.

For WSDOT's wingwalls replacement work at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal, NMFS is requiring WSDOT to implement the following mitigation measures to minimize the potential impacts to marine mammals in the project vicinity as a result of the in-water construction activities.

Since the measured source levels (at 10 and 16 m) of the vibratory hammer involved in pile removal and pile driving are below NMFS' current thresholds for Level A harassment takes, i.e., below 180 dB (rms) re 1 μ Pa, no exclusion zone will be established, and there will be no required shutdown measures except when take of southern resident killer whales (SRKW's) approach the authorized limit (see below). Instead, WSDOT is required to establish and monitor the 120 dB (rms) re 1 μ Pa zone of influence (ZOI, see below Monitoring and Reporting section).

One significant mitigation measure for WSDOT's pile removal and pile driving activities is ramping up, or soft start, of vibratory pile hammers. The purpose of this procedure is to prevent the startling behavior of marine mammals in the vicinity of the construction activity from sudden loud noise.

Soft start requires contractors to initiate the vibratory hammer at reduced power for 15 seconds with a 1 minute interval, and repeat such procedures for an additional two times.

In addition, monitoring for marine mammal presence will take place 30 minutes before, during, and 30 minutes after pile driving to document marine mammal occurrence and responses

before, during, and after the pile driving and pile removal activities (see Monitoring and Reporting section below).

In addition, WSDOT will implement shutdown measures whenever SRKW's are present in the vicinity of the project area and take all practical steps to avoid exposing SRKW's to sound levels that result in harassment. If it is unknown whether it is a SRKW or a transient killer whale, it shall be assumed to be a SRKW, and appropriate mitigation measures shall be implemented.

Further, if the number of any allotted marine mammal takes reaches the limits under the IHA, WSDOT will implement shutdown measures if such species/stock of animal approaches the 120 dB Level B harassment zone.

Finally, to avoid exceeding its SRKW take limit, WSDOT may not resume activities until any SRKW or unidentified killer whale (1) is observed to have left the Level B harassment zone or (2) has not been seen or otherwise detected within the Level B harassment zone for 30 minutes.

Mitigation Conclusions

Based on our evaluation of the prescribed mitigation measures, NMFS has determined the measures provide the means of effecting the least practicable impact on marine mammal species or stocks and their habitat, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Measures

Any ITA issued under Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA is required to prescribe, where applicable, "requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking". The MMPA implementing regulations at 50 CFR 216.104 (a)(13) state that requests for ITAs must include the suggested means of accomplishing the necessary monitoring and reporting that will result in increased knowledge of the species and of the level of taking or impacts on populations of marine mammals that are expected to be present in the action area.

(1) Protected Species Observers (PSOs)

WSDOT will employ qualified protected species observers (PSOs) to monitor the 120 dB re 1 μ Pa (rms) for marine mammals. Qualifications for marine mammal observers include:

- Visual acuity in both eyes (correction is permissible) sufficient for discernment of moving targets at the water's surface with ability to estimate

target size and distance. Use of binoculars is necessary to correctly identify the target.

- Advanced education (at least some college level courses) in biological science, wildlife management, mammalogy or related fields (Bachelor's degree or higher is preferred), but not required.

- Experience or training in the field identification of marine mammals (cetaceans and pinnipeds).

- Sufficient training, orientation or experience with the construction operation to provide for personal safety during observations.

- Ability to communicate orally, by radio or in person, with project personnel to provide real time information on marine mammals observed in the area as necessary.

- Experience and ability to conduct field observations and collect data according to assigned protocols (this may include academic experience).

- Writing skills sufficient to prepare a report of observations that would include such information as the number and type of marine mammals observed; the behavior of marine mammals in the project area during construction, dates and times when observations were conducted; dates and times when in-water construction activities were conducted; and dates and times when marine mammals were present at or within the defined ZOI.

(2) Monitoring Protocols

PSOs will be present on site at all times during pile removal and driving. Marine mammal behavior, overall numbers of individuals observed, frequency of observation, and the time corresponding to the daily tidal cycle will be recorded.

The following protocols will be used for marine mammal monitoring during the Bremerton Ferry Terminal construction work:

- A range finder or hand-held global positioning system device will be used to ensure that the 120 dB re 1 μ Pa (rms) Level B behavioral harassment ZOI is monitored.

- A 30-minute pre-construction marine mammal monitoring period will be required before the first pile driving or pile removal of the day. A 30-minute post-construction marine mammal monitoring period will be required after the last pile driving or pile removal of the day. If the construction personnel take a break between subsequent pile driving or pile removal for more than 30 minutes, then additional pre-construction marine mammal monitoring will be required before the

next start-up of pile driving or pile removal.

- If marine mammals are observed, the following information will be documented:

- Species of observed marine mammals;

- Number of observed marine mammal individuals;

- Behavioral of observed marine mammals;

- Location within the ZOI; and

- Animals' reaction (if any) to pile-driving activities.

- During vibratory pile removal and driving, one land-based biologist will monitor the area from the terminal work site, and one boat with a qualified PSO shall navigate the ZOI in a circular path. All PSOs shall use binoculars to conducting monitoring.

- In addition, WSDOT will contact the Orca Network and/or Center for Whale Research to determine the location of the nearest marine mammal sightings. Sightings are called or emailed into the Orca Network and immediately distributed to other sighting networks including: the Northwest Fisheries Science Center of NOAA Fisheries, the Center for Whale Research, Cascadia Research, the Whale Museum Hotline, and the British Columbia Sightings Network.

- Marine mammal occurrence information collected by the Orca Network also includes detection by the following hydrophone systems: (1) The SeaSound Remote Sensing Network, a system of interconnected hydrophones installed in the marine environment of Haro Strait (west side of San Juan Island) to study killer whale communication, underwater noise, bottomfish ecology, and local climatic conditions, and (2) A hydrophone at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center that measures average underwater sound levels and automatically detects unusual sounds.

NMFS has determined that these monitoring measures are adequate, particularly as it relates to assessing the level of taking or impacts to affected species. The land-based PSO is expected to be positioned in a location that will maximize his/her ability to detect marine mammals and will also be required to utilize binoculars to improve detection rates. In addition, the boat-based PSO will cruise within the 120 dB ZOI, which is not a particularly large zone, thereby allowing him/her to conduct additional monitoring with binoculars. With respect to the prevention of takes of SRKW, NMFS concluded that WSDOT's visual and acoustic monitoring is adequate because (1) killer whales have large dorsal fins

and can be easily spotted from great distances; (2) SRKWs typically move in groups which makes visual detection much easier; and (3) resident killer whales are very vocal, which makes them relatively easier for acoustic detection.

Reporting Measures

WSDOT will provide NMFS with a draft monitoring report within 90 days of the conclusion of the construction work. This report will detail the monitoring protocol, summarize the data recorded during monitoring, and estimate the number of marine mammals that may have been harassed.

If comments are received from the NMFS West Coast Regional Administrator or NMFS Office of Protected Resources on the draft report, a final report will be submitted to NMFS within 30 days thereafter. If no comments are received from NMFS, the draft report will be considered to be the final report.

Notification of Injured or Dead Marine Mammals

In addition to the reporting measures listed above, NMFS will require that WSDOT notify NMFS' Office of Protected Resources and NMFS' Stranding Network of sighting an injured or dead marine mammal in the vicinity of marine operations. Depending on the circumstance of the incident, WSDOT shall take one of the following reporting protocols when an injured or dead marine mammal is discovered in the vicinity of the action area.

(1.) In the unanticipated event that the construction activities clearly cause the take of a marine mammal in a manner prohibited by this Authorization, such as an injury, serious injury or mortality (e.g., ship-strike, gear interaction, and/or entanglement), WSDOT shall immediately cease all operations and immediately report the incident to the Supervisor of Incidental Take Program, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the Northwest Regional Stranding Coordinators. The report must include the following information:

(A.) Time, date, and location (latitude/longitude) of the incident;

(B.) Description of the incident;

(C.) Status of all sound source use in the 24 hours preceding the incident;

(D.) Environmental conditions (e.g., wind speed and direction, Beaufort sea state, cloud cover, visibility, and water depth);

(E.) Description of marine mammal observations in the 24 hours preceding the incident;

(F.) Species identification or description of the animal(s) involved;
(G.) The fate of the animal(s); and
(H.) Photographs or video footage of the animal (if equipment is available).

Activities shall not resume until NMFS is able to review the circumstances of the prohibited take. NMFS shall work with WSDOT to determine what is necessary to minimize the likelihood of further prohibited take and ensure MMPA compliance. WSDOT may not resume their activities until notified by NMFS via letter, email, or telephone.

(2.) In the event that WSDOT discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead PSO determines that the cause of the injury or death is unknown and the death is relatively recent (i.e., in less than a moderate state of decomposition as described in the next paragraph), WSDOT will immediately report the incident to the Supervisor of the Incidental Take Program, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the Northwest Regional Stranding Coordinators. The report must include the same information identified above. Activities may continue while NMFS reviews the circumstances of the incident. NMFS will work with WSDOT to determine whether modifications in the activities are appropriate.

(3.) In the event that WSDOT discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead PSO determines that the injury or death is not associated with or related to the activities authorized in the IHA (e.g., previously wounded animal, carcass with moderate to advanced decomposition, or scavenger damage), WSDOT shall report the incident to the Supervisor of the Incidental Take Program, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the Northwest Regional Stranding Coordinators, within 24 hours of the

discovery. WSDOT shall provide photographs or video footage (if available) or other documentation of the stranded animal sighting to NMFS and the Marine Mammal Stranding Network. WSDOT can continue its operations under such a case.

Estimated Take by Incidental Harassment

As mentioned in the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA, a worst-case scenario for the Bremerton Ferry Terminal project assumes that it may take four days to remove the existing piles and seven days to install the new piles. The maximum total number of hours of pile removal activity is about 28 hours, and pile-driving activity is about 6.75 hours (averaging about 3.2 hours of active pile removal/driving for each construction day).

Also, as described in the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA, for non-impulse noise, NMFS uses 120 dB (rms) re 1 μ Pa as the threshold for Level B behavioral harassment. The distance to the 120 dB contour Level B acoustical harassment threshold due to vibratory pile driving for the Bremerton ferry terminal project extends a maximum of 4.7 km (2.9 miles) before land is intersected. The ZOI would be monitored during construction to estimate actual harassment take of marine mammals.

Airborne noises can affect pinnipeds, especially resting seals hauled out on rocks or sand spits. The airborne 90 dB Level B threshold for hauled out harbor seals was estimated at 37 m, and the airborne 100 dB Level B threshold for all other pinnipeds is estimated at 12 m.

The nearest known harbor seal haulout site to the Bremerton ferry terminal is 8.5 km north and west (shoreline distance). The nearest documented California and Steller sea lion haulout sites to the Bremerton ferry terminal are navigation buoys in Rich

Passage, approximately 9 and 10 km east of the terminal. The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard security barrier California sea lion haulout is located approximately 435 m SW of the ferry terminal.

In-air noise from this project will not reach any haulout sites, but harbor seals swimming on the surface through the 37 m zone, and other pinnipeds swimming on the surface through the 12 m zone during vibratory pile removal or driving may be temporarily disturbed.

Incidental take is estimated for each species by estimating the likelihood of a marine mammal being present within a ZOI during active pile removal or driving. Expected marine mammal presence is determined by past observations and general abundance near the Bremerton Ferry Terminal during the construction window. Typically, potential take is estimated by multiplying the area of the ZOI by the local animal density. This provides an estimate of the number of animals that might occupy the ZOI at any given moment. However, there are no density estimates for any Puget Sound population of marine mammal. As a result, the take requests were estimated using local marine mammal data sets (e.g., Orca Network, state and federal agencies), opinions from state and federal agencies, and observations from Navy biologists.

Based on the estimates, approximately 649 Pacific harbor seals, 1,584 California sea lions, 66 Steller sea lions, 28 killer whales (24 transient, 4 Southern Resident killer whales), 8 gray whales, and 8 humpback whales could be exposed to received sound levels at or above 120 dB re 1 μ Pa (rms) from the proposed Bremerton Ferry Terminal wingwalls replacement work. A summary of the estimated takes authorized in this IHA is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3—ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MARINE MAMMALS THAT MAY BE EXPOSED TO RECEIVED PILE DRIVING AND PILE REMOVAL LEVELS ABOVE 120 dB RE 1 μ Pa (RMS)

Species	Estimated marine mammal takes	Percentage of population
Pacific harbor seal	649	2.02
California sea lion	1,841	0.53
Steller sea lion	66	0.11
Killer whale, transient	24	6.8
Killer whale, Southern Resident	4	5.0
Gray whale	8	0.04
Humpback whale	8	0.39

Analyses and Determinations

Negligible Impact

Pursuant to NMFS' regulations implementing the MMPA, an applicant is required to estimate the number of animals that will be "taken" by the specified activities (i.e., takes by harassment only, or takes by harassment, injury, and/or death). This estimate informs the analysis that NMFS must perform to determine whether the activity will have a "negligible impact" on the species or stock. Level B (behavioral) harassment occurs at the level of the individual(s) and does not assume any resulting population-level consequences, though there are known avenues through which behavioral disturbance of individuals can result in population-level effects. A negligible impact finding is based on the lack of likely adverse effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival (i.e., population-level effects). An estimate of the number of Level B harassment takes alone is not enough information on which to base an impact determination.

In addition to considering estimates of the number of marine mammals that might be "taken" through behavioral harassment, NMFS considers other factors, such as the likely nature of any responses (their intensity, duration, etc.), the context of any responses (critical reproductive time or location, migration, etc.), as well as the number and nature of estimated Level A takes, the number of estimated mortalities, and effects on habitat.

The WSDOT's proposed Bremerton Ferry Terminal construction project would conduct vibratory pile removal and pile driving to replace wingwall structures. Elevated underwater noises are expected to be generated as a result of pile removal and pile driving activities. However, noise levels from the machinery and activities are not expected to reach to the level that may cause temporary threshold shift (TTS), injury (including permanent threshold shift), or mortality to marine mammals. Therefore, NMFS does not expect that any animals would experience Level A harassment or Level B harassment in the form of TTS from being exposed to in-water pile driving and pile removal associated with WSDOT construction project.

In addition, these low intensity, localized, and short-term noise exposures may cause brief startle reactions or short-term behavioral modification by the animals. These reactions and behavioral changes are expected to subside quickly when the exposures cease. In addition, no important feeding and/or reproductive

areas of marine mammals are known to be near the action area. Therefore, the take resulting from the Bremerton Ferry Terminal construction projects is not reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to adversely affect the marine mammal species or stocks through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival. The maximum estimated 120 dB isopleths from vibratory pile driving is approximately 4.7 km from the pile before being blocked by landmass.

The closest documented California sea lion haulout site to the Bremerton Ferry Terminal is the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard security barrier, located approximately 435 m SW of the ferry terminal. The next closest documented California sea lion haulout sites to the Bremerton Ferry Terminal are navigation buoys and net pens in Rich Passage, approximately nine and ten km east of the terminal, respectively. However, it is estimated that airborne noise from vibratory pile driving a 30-in steel pile would fall below 90 dB and 100 dB re 1 20 μ Pa at 37 m and 12 m from the pile, respectively. No other pinniped haulout site exists in the vicinity of the proposed project area. Therefore, pinnipeds hauled out at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard security barrier will not be affected.

Based on the analysis contained herein of the likely effects of the specified activity on marine mammals and their habitat, and taking into consideration of the implementation of the required mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS finds that the total marine mammal take from the vibratory pile removal and pile driving associated with wingwall replacements at Bremerton Ferry Terminal will have a negligible impact on the affected marine mammal species or stocks.

Small Numbers

Based on long-term marine mammal monitoring and studies in the vicinity of the proposed construction areas, it is estimated that approximately 649 Pacific harbor seals, 1,841 California sea lions, 66 Steller sea lions, 28 killer whales (24 transient, 4 Southern Resident killer whales), 8 gray whales, and 8 humpback whales could be exposed to received noise levels above 120 dB_{rms} re 1 μ Pa from the proposed construction work at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal. These numbers represent approximately 0.04%–6.8% of the stocks and populations of these species could be affected by Level B behavioral harassment. As mentioned earlier in this document, the worst case scenario for the proposed construction work would only take a total of 34.75

hours (28 hours for pile removal and 6.75 hours for pile driving). Based on the analysis contained herein of the likely effects of the specified activity on marine mammals and their habitat, and taking into consideration the implementation of the mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS finds that small numbers of marine mammals will be taken relative to the populations of the affected species or stocks.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NMFS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and analyzed the potential impacts to marine mammals that would result from WSDOT's wingwalls replacement work at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on February 4, 2014. A copy of the EA and FONSI is available upon request (see **ADDRESSES**).

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The humpback whale, Southern Resident stock of killer whale, and the eastern population of Steller sea lions, are the only marine mammal species currently listed under the ESA that could occur in the vicinity of WSDOT's construction projects. NMFS' Permits and Conservation Division consulted with NMFS' West Coast Regional Office Division of Protected Resources under section 7 of the ESA on the issuance of an IHA to WSDOT under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA for this activity. A Biological Opinion was issued on February 19, 2013, which concludes that issuance of the IHA is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the ESA-listed marine mammal species. NMFS will issue an Incidental Take Statement under this Biological Opinion which contains reasonable and prudent measures with implementing terms and conditions to minimize the effects of take of listed species.

Authorization

NMFS has issued an IHA to WSDOT for the take of small numbers of six marine mammal species incidental to wingwalls replacement construction activities at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal in Washington State, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: March 5, 2014.

Donna S. Wieting,

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

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