

Administration, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On September 27, 2005, Joint Stock Company Liepajas Metalurgs, a Latvian producer of subject merchandise, requested an administrative review of the antidumping duty order on Steel Concrete Reinforcing Bars from Latvia. On September 30, 2005, the petitioners in the proceeding, the Rebar Trade Action Coalition¹ and its individual members, also requested an administrative review of the antidumping order. On October 25, 2005, the Department published a notice of initiation of the administrative review, covering the period September 1, 2004, through August 31, 2005 (70 FR 61601). The preliminary results are currently due no later than June 2, 2006.

Statutory Time Limits

Section 751(a)(3)(A) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (the Act), requires the Department of Commerce (the Department) to complete the preliminary results of an administrative review within 245 days after the last day of the anniversary month of an order/finding for which a review is requested, and the final results within 120 days after the date on which the preliminary results are published. However, if it is not practicable to complete the review within these time periods, section 751(a)(3)(A) of the Act allows the Department to extend the time limit for (1) the preliminary results to a maximum of 365 days after the last day of the anniversary month of an order/finding for which a review is requested, and (2) the final results to 180 days (or 300 days if the Department does not extend the time limit for the preliminary results) from the date of publication of the preliminary results.

Extension of Time Limit for Preliminary Results of Review

We determine that it is not practicable to complete the preliminary results of this review within the original time limits. Several complex issues related to merchandise classification, date of sale, and cost of production have been raised during the course of this administrative review. The Department needs more time to address these items and evaluate the issues more thoroughly.

For the reasons noted above, we are extending the time limit for completion of the preliminary results until no later than August 1, 2006. We intend to issue the final results no later than 120 days after publication of the preliminary results.

This notice is issued and published in accordance with section 751(a)(3)(A) of the Act.

Dated: April 28, 2006.

Stephen J. Claeys,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Import Administration.

from through May 20, 2006. The operation will consist of laying seismic cables with geophones on the frozen sea ice, employing the vibroseis method of energy (sound source) production, and recording the seismic signals. Water depths in the majority of the planned survey area are less than 3 m (9.8 ft).

The purpose of the project is to gather information about the subsurface of the earth by measuring acoustic waves, which are generated on or near the surface. The acoustic waves reflect at boundaries in the earth that are characterized by acoustic impedance contrasts.

Description of the Activity

The seismic surveys use the "reflection" method of data acquisition. Seismic exploration uses a controlled energy source to generate acoustic waves that travel through the earth, including sea ice and water, as well as sub-sea geologic formations, and then uses ground sensors to record the reflected energy transmitted back to the surface. When acoustic energy is generated, compression and shear waves form and travel in and on the earth. The compression and shear waves are affected by the geological formations of the earth as they travel in it and may be reflected, refracted, diffracted or transmitted when they reach a boundary represented by an acoustic impedance contrast. Vibroseis seismic operations use large trucks with vibrators that systematically put variable frequency energy into the earth. At least 1.2 m (4 ft) of sea ice is required to support the various equipment and vehicles used to transport seismic equipment offshore for exploration activities. These ice conditions generally exist from 1 January until 31 May in the Beaufort Sea. Several vehicles are normally associated with a typical vibroseis operation. One or two vehicles with survey crews move ahead of the operation and mark the energy input points. Crews with wheeled vehicles often require trail clearance with bulldozers for adequate access to and within the site. Crews with tracked vehicles are typically limited by heavy snow cover and may require trail clearance beforehand.

With the vibroseis technique, activity on the surveyed seismic line begins with the placement of sensors. All sensors are connected to the recording vehicle by multi-pair cable sections. The vibrators move to the beginning of the line and begin recording data. The vibrators begin vibrating in synchrony via a simultaneous radio signal to all vehicles. In a typical survey, each vibrator will vibrate four times at each

location. The entire formation of vibrators subsequently moves forward to the next energy input point (e.g. 67 m, or 220 ft, in most applications) and repeats the process. In a typical 16- to 18-hour day, a surveys will complete 6- to 16 km (4 to 10 linear miles) in 2-dimensional seismic operations and 24 to 64 km (15 to 40 linear miles) in a 3-dimensional seismic operation.

Comments and Responses

A notice of receipt and request for 30-day public comment on the application and proposed authorization was published on February 27, 2006 (71 FR 9782). During the 30-day public comment period, NMFS received the following comments from the Marine Mammal Commission (Commission).

Comment 1: As noted in the Commission's previous letters on similar requests, the Commission believes that the effects of the activities proposed

the end of the seismic surveys. A detailed description of the survey is provided in that **Federal Register** notice (71 FR 9782, February 27, 2006) and is not repeated here. However, an expanded program to collect information on prey availability, foraging patterns, and contaminant levels of marine mammals is beyond the scope of the proposed action.

Comment 4: The Commission believes that the use of trained dogs is the only reliable method for locating ringed seal lairs and other structures. Thus, if trained dogs are not available for the initial survey, the Commission does not believe that the NMFS should accept monitoring by humans as an alternative until it has been demonstrated that such monitoring is as effective as that carried out using dogs.

Response: While NMFS believes the use of trained dogs to locate ringed seal lairs during on-ice surveys conducted in areas with water depth less than 3 m (9.8 ft) is the best method to detect ringed seals in winter, NMFS also believes that the use of experienced subsistence hunters should be an alternative only if no dogs are available. In such cases, NMFS requires the applicant to provide certifications from owners of trained dogs stating that no dogs are available for the purposed surveys during the survey days. The applicant points out it has certain concerns over the required dogs, including the biasing of locating abandoned versus active holes, the potential of attracting polar bears, potential takes of seals by dogs, and the opposition from the native groups.

Comment 5: The Commission also notes that the probability of physical damage to seal lairs and holes or individual seals is related to the total area affected, and it suggests that vehicles stay on the actual shot lines to the maximum extent possible.

Response: The majority of the areas ($\leq$ 95 percent) that would be subject to on-ice seismic survey would be under 3 m (9.8 ft) deep, therefore are not ringed seal habitat. Nevertheless, NMFS is requiring the applicant to have survey vehicles stay on the actual shot lines to the maximum extent possible.

Comment 6: The Commission further recommends that the authorization specify that operations be suspended if a mortality or serious injury of a seal occurs. The suspension would provide an opportunity for NMFS to determine whether steps can be taken to avoid further injuries or mortalities and whether an incidental take authorization is needed under section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA.

Response: NMFS agrees, and the IHA condition will specify that operations be suspended if a mortality or serious injury of a seal is detected.

Comment 7: The Commission noted that the application indicates that a brief portion of the proposed project may be conducted over open water if on-ice studies are inadequate and further resolution is needed. Such open-water work would involve the use of small airgun arrays. If it has not already done so, the Commission asks NMFS to request additional information from the applicant on this portion of the proposed activities (e.g., sizes of airguns, zones of influence, etc.).

Response: The application NMFS received on February 7, 2006, indicates that open-water surveys would only be necessary if on-ice seismic surveys indicate that there may be a dead zone from where inadequate or jumbled seismic

seismic activities do not interfere with subsistence harvest of ringed or bearded seals.

The level of impacts, while anticipated to be negligible, will be assessed by conducting a second seal structure survey shortly after the end of the seismic surveys. A single on-ice survey will be conducted by biologists on snow machines using a GPS to relocate and determine the status of seal structures located during the initial survey. The status (active vs. inactive) of each structure will be determined to assess the level of incidental take by seismic operations. The number of active seal structures abandoned between the initial survey and the final survey will be the basis for enumerating possible harassment takes. If dogs are not available for the initial survey, takings will be estimated by using observed densities of seals on ice reported by Moulton *et al.* (2001) for the Northstar development, which is approximately 24 nm (46 km) from the eastern edge of the proposed activity area.

Seal structures take estimates will be determined for the portion of the activity area exposed to seismic surveys in water depths of 3 m (9.8 ft) or less. Take for this area will be estimated by using the observed density (13/100 km²) reported by Moulton *et al.* (2001) for water depths between 0 to 3 m (0 to 9.8 ft) in the Northstar project area, which is the only source of a density estimate stratified by water depth for the Beaufort Sea. This will be an overestimation requiring a substantial downward adjustment to better reflect the likely take of seals using lairs, since few if any of the structures in these water depths would be used for birthing, and the Moulton *et al.* (2001) estimate includes all seals.

Reporting

An annual report must be submitted to NMFS within 90 days of completing the year's activities.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

NMFS has determined that no species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA will be affected by issuing an incidental harassment authorization under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA to Kuukpiik for this on-ice seismic survey.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The information provided in Environmental Assessments (EAs) prepared in 1993 and 1998 for winter seismic activities led NOAA to conclude that implementation of either the

preferred alternative or other alternatives identified in the EA would not have a significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement was not prepared. The proposed action discussed in this document is not substantially different from the 1993 and 1998 actions, and a reference search has indicated that no significant new scientific information or analyses have been developed in the past several years that would warrant new NEPA documentation.

Determinations

The anticipated impact of winter seismic activities on the species or stock of ringed and bearded seals is expected to be negligible (and limited to the taking of small numbers) for the following reasons:

U.S. Beaufort Sea, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: April 28, 2006.

Donna Wieting,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 032706A]

Notice of Availability of Final Stock Assessment Reports

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

ACTION: Notice of availability; response to comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS has incorporated public comments into revisions of marine mammal stock assessment reports (SARs). These reports for 2005 are now complete and available to the public.

ADDRESSES: Send requests for copies of reports or revised guidelines to: Chief, Marine Mammal Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226, Attn: Stock Assessments.

Copies of the Alaska Regional SARs may be requested from Robyn Angliss, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way, BIN 15700, Seattle, WA 98115.

Copies of the Atlantic Regional SARs may be requested from Gordon Waring, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543.

Copies of the Pacific Regional SARs may be requested from Tina Fahy, Southwest Regional Office, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Eagle, Office of Protected Resources, 301-713-2322, ext. 105, e-mail Tom.Eagle@noaa.gov; Robyn Angliss, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 206-526-4032, e-mail Robyn.Angliss@noaa.gov; Gordon W