

Commission (CCC), in order to strengthen the links between Federal and State coastal zone management and water quality programs. Therefore, the SWRCB, the RWQCBs and CCC undertook a joint effort to improve the statewide nonpoint source program and comply with CZARA requirements. In February 1994, the State initiated a comprehensive review process to consider the requirements of Section 6217 and update its existing statewide nonpoint source management program rather than create a separate program dealing exclusively with coastal waters. The State anticipated that a statewide approach would reduce resource expenditures and eliminate the potential for regulatory inequities which might occur if a separate nonpoint source pollution control program was instituted for coastal areas.

Technical advisory committees (TACs), composed of representatives from industry, academia, environmental groups, and state and federal agencies, were convened to provide critical input to the program review. For one year the TAC's reviewed current nonpoint source programs and developed consensus-based recommendations for improving implementation, including innovative approaches for using existing programs more efficiently, and allowing limited staff and fiscal resources to be focused on the most pressing water quality problems. The 10 separate technical advisory committee (TAC) reports identified a wide range of activities aimed at implementing the CZARA management measures, improving the State's nonpoint source program, and reducing the water quality impacts associated with nonpoint source pollution. In addition these reports contained several common themes, such as: voluntary cooperation is preferred over prescriptive measures; improve outreach and technical assistance to individuals and local groups; support local stewardship and specific, problem-responsive measures devised through comprehensive watershed management plans; better coordinate activities of the various resource management agencies; and where voluntary efforts have not succeeded and significant water quality problems persist, utilize appropriate authorities to achieve environmental improvements.

The SWRCB and the CCC then prepared the State of California's response to CZARA and submitted the documents in September 1995 to EPA and NOAA, as required by the statute. The State's submittal package included two principal documents:

- "California's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Submittal," which is an account of the State's existing programs related to the management of nonpoint pollution, and
- "Initiatives in Nonpoint Source Management," which describes several Initiatives adopted by the SWRCB to improve the nonpoint source program, along with the associated TAC reports.

EPA and NOAA's Review of California's 6217 Submittal

The proposed findings document now available for public review concludes that California's nonpoint source program is encouraging because of its broad scope in terms of the State's authorities and programs to address nonpoint source pollution, its statewide applicability and the watershed approach being proposed. However, the State's submittal is not sufficient to conform with the requirements of CZARA because (in summary):

- The submittal does not describe how the management measures are incorporated into the State's program and how they will be implemented;
- The submittal does not describe how existing "back-up" authorities will be used to ensure implementation of the management measures, if voluntary efforts fail;
- The submittal does not adequately address key gaps and recommendations identified by the Technical Advisory Committees;
- The submittal does not incorporate the activities, roles and responsibilities of the CCC;
- The submittal does not adequately address common program elements related to administrative coordination, technical assistance, critical coastal areas, additional management measures and monitoring.

EPA and NOAA have reached agreement with the CCC and the SWRCB on an "action plan" for improving California's Nonpoint Source Program that will also assist the State in meeting the requirements of Section 6217 of CZARA. The "action plan" outlines a framework and key activities that the CCC and the SWRCB along with the RWQCBs will undertake to prepare an implementation strategy to improve efforts to reduce nonpoint source pollution. EPA and NOAA anticipate that the completion of the activities in the "action plan" will address the submittal's current shortcomings in a manner that will provide California with a more effective nonpoint source program and help meet the conditions for programs approval identified in the proposed findings. EPA and NOAA are encouraging the State to base this

strategy, to the fullest extent possible, on the CZARA materials submitted to date and to continue to involve a wide range of stakeholders in preparing and implementing a nonpoint source program that more fully protects California's water quality and complies with CZARA.

Copies of the Proposed Findings Document, Environmental Assessment, and Finding of No Significant Impact may be obtained upon request from: Joseph P. Flanagan, Coastal Programs Division (N/ORM3), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, NOS, NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910, tel. (301) 713-3121, x201.

DATES: Individuals or organizations wishing to submit comments on the proposed Findings or Environmental Assessment should do so by February 9, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be made to: Joseph A. Uravitch, Coastal Programs Division (N/ORM3), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, NOS, NOAA 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910, tel. (301) 713-3155, x195. (Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog 11.419 Coastal Zone Management Program Administration)

Dated: January 6, 1998.

Captain Evelyn J. Fields,
Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Robert H. Wayland III,
Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds, Environmental Protection Agency.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service Modernization and Associated Restructuring

AGENCY: National Weather Service (NWS), NOAA, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and opportunity for public comment.

SUMMARY: The NWS is publishing proposed certifications for the automation and closure of the following Weather Service offices at the indicated FAA Weather Observation Service Level:

(1) Astoria, Oregon Weather Service Office (WSO) which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service

Level D and with services being provided by the future Portland, Oregon Weather Forecast Office (WFO); and

(2) Lexington, Kentucky WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level C and with services being provided by the future Louisville, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio WFOs.

In accordance with Pub. L. 102-567, the public will have 60-days in which to comment on these proposed automation and closure certifications.

DATES: Comments are requested by March 10, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the proposed automation and closure packages should be sent to Tom Beaver, Room 11426, 1325 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone 301-713-0300. All comments should be sent to Tom Beaver at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Beaver at 301-713-0300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with section 706 of Pub. L. 102-567, the Secretary of Commerce must certify that these automations and closures will not result in any degradation of service to the affected areas of responsibility and must publish the proposed automation and closure certifications in the FR. The documentation supporting each proposed certification includes the following:

(1) a draft memorandum by the meteorologist(s)-in-charge recommending the certification, the final of which will be endorsed by the Regional Director and the Assistant Administrator of the NWS if appropriate, after consideration of public comments and completion of consultation with the Modernization Transition Committee (the Committee);

(2) a description of local weather characteristics and weather-related concerns which affect the weather services provided within the service area;

(3) a comparison of the services provided within the service area and the services to be provided after such action;

(4) a description of any recent or expected modernization of NWS operation which will enhance services in the service area;

(5) an identification of any area within the affected service area which would not receive coverage (at an elevation of 10,000 feet) by the next generation weather radar network;

(6) evidence, based upon operational demonstration of modernized NWS operations, which was considered in reaching the conclusion that no

degradation in service will result from such action including the ASOS Commissioning Report; series of three letters between NWS and FAA confirming that weather services will continue in full compliance with applicable flight aviation rules after ASOS commissioning; Surface Aviation Observation Transition Checklist documenting transfer of augmentation and backup responsibility from NWS to FAA; successful resolution of ASOS user confirmation of services complaints; and an in-place supplementary data program at the responsible WFO(s);

(7) warning and forecast verification statistics for pre-modernized and modernized services which were utilized in determining that services have not been degraded;

(8) an Air Safety Appraisal for offices which are located on an airport; and

(9) a letter appointing the liaison officer.

These proposed certifications do not include any report of the Committee which could be submitted in accordance with sections 706(b)(6) and 707(c) of Pub. L. 102-567. In December 1995 the Committee decided that, in general, they would forego the optional consultation on proposed certifications. Instead, the Committee would just review certifications after the public comment period had closed so their consultation would be with the benefit of public comments that had been submitted.

This notice does not include the complete certification packages because they are too voluminous to publish. Copies of the certification packages and supporting documentation can be obtained through the contact listed above.

Once all public comments have been received and considered, the NWS will complete consultation with the Committee and determine whether to proceed with the final certification. At the June 25, 1997 MTC meeting, the Committee stated that its endorsement of certifications is "subject to the following qualifications:

(1) The number of trained staff in each modernized field office meets staffing requirements as established by the modernization criteria and documented in the National Implementation Plan and the Human Resources Plan (WBS 1100). Delays in training or failure to fill required positions will increase the risk of degradation of service;

(2) The availability of operational systems in each modernized field office meets requirements as established by the modernization criteria and documented in the System

Commissioning and Support Function Demonstration Plans; and

(3) The operational and administrative infrastructures and technical development needed to support the modernized field offices be maintained as required by the modernization plan." These qualifications have been met for the above proposed certifications. If a decision to certify is made, the Secretary of Commerce must publish the final certifications in the FR and transmit the certifications to the appropriate Congressional committees prior to automating and closing these offices.

Dated: January 5, 1998.

Robert S. Winokur,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 120297A]

Marine Mammals; Permit No. 873 (P772#63)

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

ACTION: Issuance of amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that on December 18, 1997, permit No. 873 issued to the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NMFS, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, CA 92038-0271, was amended.

ADDRESSES: The amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS,

1315 East-West Highway, Suite 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289); and

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802, (562/980-4016).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The amendment has been granted under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the provisions of § 216.39 of the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the provisions of § 222.25 of the