

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2015

Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue Northwest, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230-0001

Dear Dr. Sullivan:

As representatives of coastal communities in New Jersey, we have serious concerns regarding the National Science Foundation's (NSF) application for Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) for a seismic survey to be conducted in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean off the coast of our state. We have heard from organizations and individuals in our Congressional districts regarding their ability to evaluate and comment on the impact of this proposal on their communities and therefore respectfully request that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provide a 60-day extension to the comment period, now scheduled to close on April 16.

As you are aware, the proposed seismic survey expected to begin in June is of great interest to our constituents as well as the entire State of New Jersey—especially given that the activity would occur during the summer months when a large percentage of revenue is generated by seasonal tourism. Additionally, New Jersey's commercial and recreational fishermen, many of whom are still recovering from the devastation and economic loss of Superstorm Sandy, have serious reservations that this activity will negatively impact their operations.

Further, we have been contacted by Clean Ocean Action (COA) an organization dedicated to preserve our pristine coastline, who has requested that members of the public have "a fair opportunity to evaluate the proposed activity." For your review, we have enclosed COA's letter to NMFS on the IHA Application requesting this extension.

We believe that due to the importance of these studies and the significant attention past studies have garnered, the need for additional time for clarification and review is paramount. Accordingly, we respectfully request the NMFS issue a 60-day extension to the public comment period to allow ample review of the application submitted as well as additional time to fully notify and educate interested parties.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response so we many appropriately respond to our constituents.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress



FRANK A. LoBIONDO
Member of Congress