
Appendix E Correspondence

**Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities
Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/
Overseas Environmental Impact Statement**

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Appendix E Correspondence

This appendix contains correspondence between the Navy, Alaska Native federally recognized tribes, and relevant government agencies. Letters were sent to 24 tribal chairpersons, presidents, or chiefs of Alaska Native federally recognized tribes (tribes also under the Indian Reorganization Act are denoted as IRA). Examples of which are depicted in this Appendix. The tribes that were sent letters announcing the notice of intent and availability of the 2020 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) are as follows:

Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor	Native Village of Nanwalek
Kaguyak Village	(English Bay, Second Chief)
Kenaitze Indian Tribe (IRA)	Native Village of Ouzinkie
Knik Tribe	Native Village of Port Graham
Native Village of Afognak	Native Village of Port Lions
Native Village of Akhiok	Native Village of Tatitlek
Native Village of Chenega	Native Village of Tyonek
Native Village of Eklutna (Eklutna Native Village)	Ninilchik Traditional Council
Native Village of Eyak	Salamatof Tribe (Village of Salamatof)
Native Village of Karluk	Seldovia Village Tribe (IRA)
Native Village of Larsen Bay	Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
Native Village of Nanwalek	Tangirnaq Native Village (Woody Island)
(English Bay, First Chief)	Yakutat Tlingit Tribe

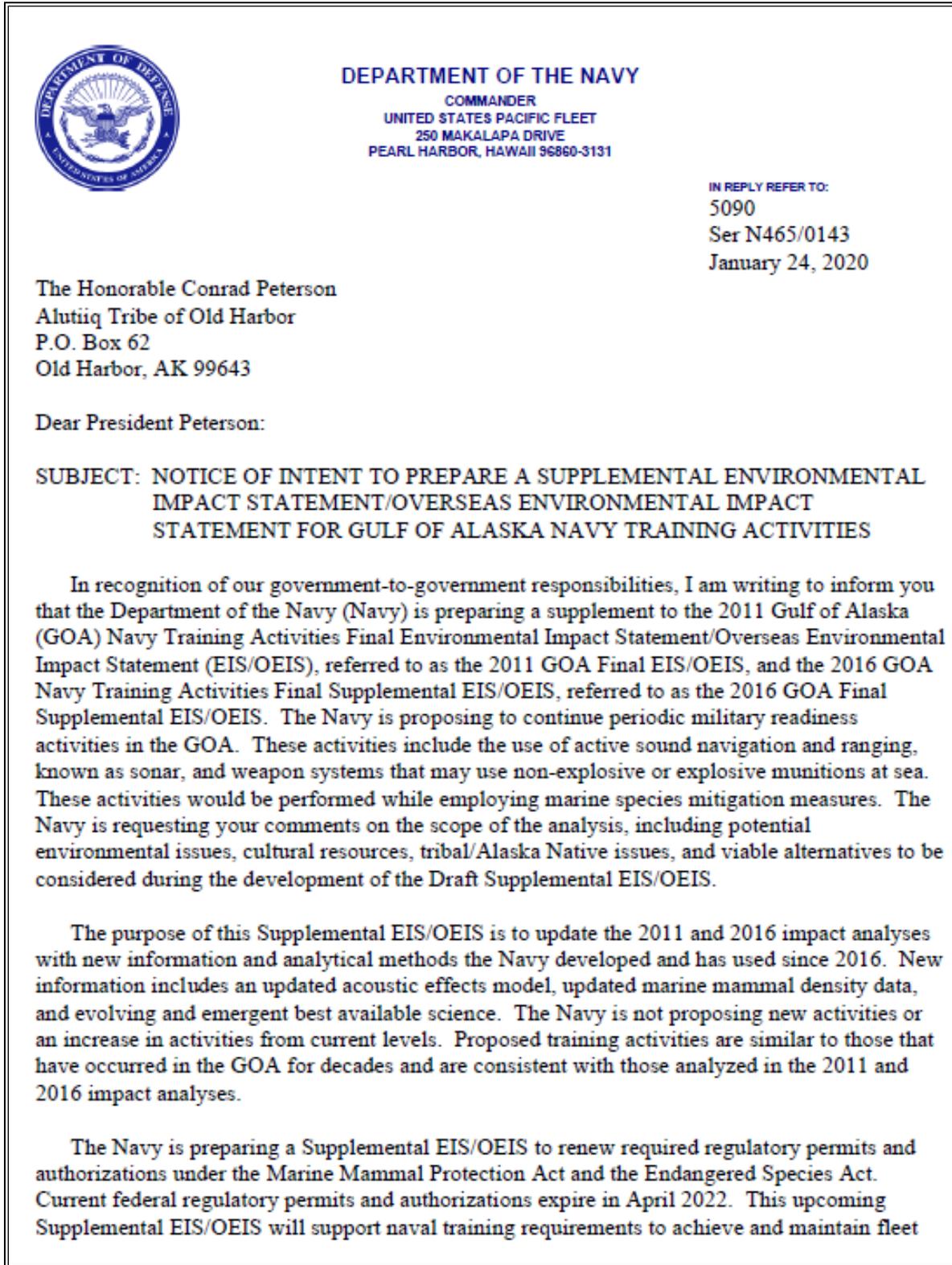
Letters were sent to 42 Tribes announcing the notice of intent and availability of the Supplement to the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS are as follows:

Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove	Native Village of False Pass
Aleut Community of St Paul Island	Native Village of Karluk
Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor	Native Village of Larsen Bay
Chignik Bay Council	Native Village of Nanwalek (English Bay)
Chignik Lake Village	Native Village of Nanwalek (English Bay)
Kaguyak Village	Native Village of Nelson Lagoon
Kenaitze Indian Tribe (IRA)	Native Village of Nikolski (IRA)
Knik Tribe	Native Village of Ouzinkie
Native Village of Afognak	Native Village of Perryville
Native Village of Akhiok	Native Village of Port Graham
Native Village of Akutan	Native Village of Port Heiden
Native Village of Atka	Native Village of Port Lions
Native Village of Belkofski	Native Village of Tatitlek
Native Village of Chenega	Native Village of Tyonek
Native Village of Chignik Lagoon	Native Village of Unga
Native Village of Eklutna (Eklutna Native Village)	Ninilchik Traditional Council
Native Village of Eyak	Pauloff Harbor Village

Qagan Tayagungin Tribe of Sand Point	Seldovia Village Tribe (IRA)
Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska	Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
Saint George Island Traditional Council	Tangirnaq Native Village (Woody Island)
Salamatof Tribe (Village of Salamatof)	Yakutat Tlingit Tribe

This appendix also contains correspondence from the National Marine Fisheries Service agreeing to the Navy's request to serve as a cooperating agency, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in response to the Navy's Notice of Intent to prepare the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS, and from Alaska State Historic Preservation Office concurring with the Navy's determination that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act does not apply to GOA Phase III actions.

E.1 Example Correspondence Letters Sent to Alaska Native Federally Recognized Tribes for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Impact Statement



5090
Ser N465/0143
January 24, 2020

readiness as required by Title 10 of the U.S. Code. The Navy will invite tribes to continue government-to-government consultation.

The Proposed Action's activities are the same as the actions presented in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS and the 2016 GOA Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS, which are to continue periodic military training activities within a Temporary Maritime Activities Area in the GOA (Enclosure 1). The Temporary Maritime Activities Area and Proposed Action, including the location, number, and frequency of major training exercises, remain unchanged from the 2016 impact analysis. In the Supplemental EIS/OEIS, the Navy will include the analysis of at-sea activities projected to meet readiness requirements beyond 2022 and into the reasonably foreseeable future, which reflects the most up-to-date compilation of training activities deemed necessary to accomplish military readiness.

The Navy will accept scoping comments throughout the comment period from Feb. 10, 2020, to March 11, 2020. All comments must be postmarked or received online by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on **March 11, 2020**, for consideration in the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. All comments submitted during the scoping period become part of the public record and substantive comments will be considered in the development of the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

Comments may be submitted online at www.GOAEIS.com or by mail to:
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest
Attention: GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager
1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

If you would like additional project information, including details on the key differences between the 2016 GOA Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS and the upcoming Supplemental EIS/OEIS, please visit the project website at www.GOAEIS.com, or contact Ms. Kimberly Kler, GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager, at kimberly.kler@navy.mil.

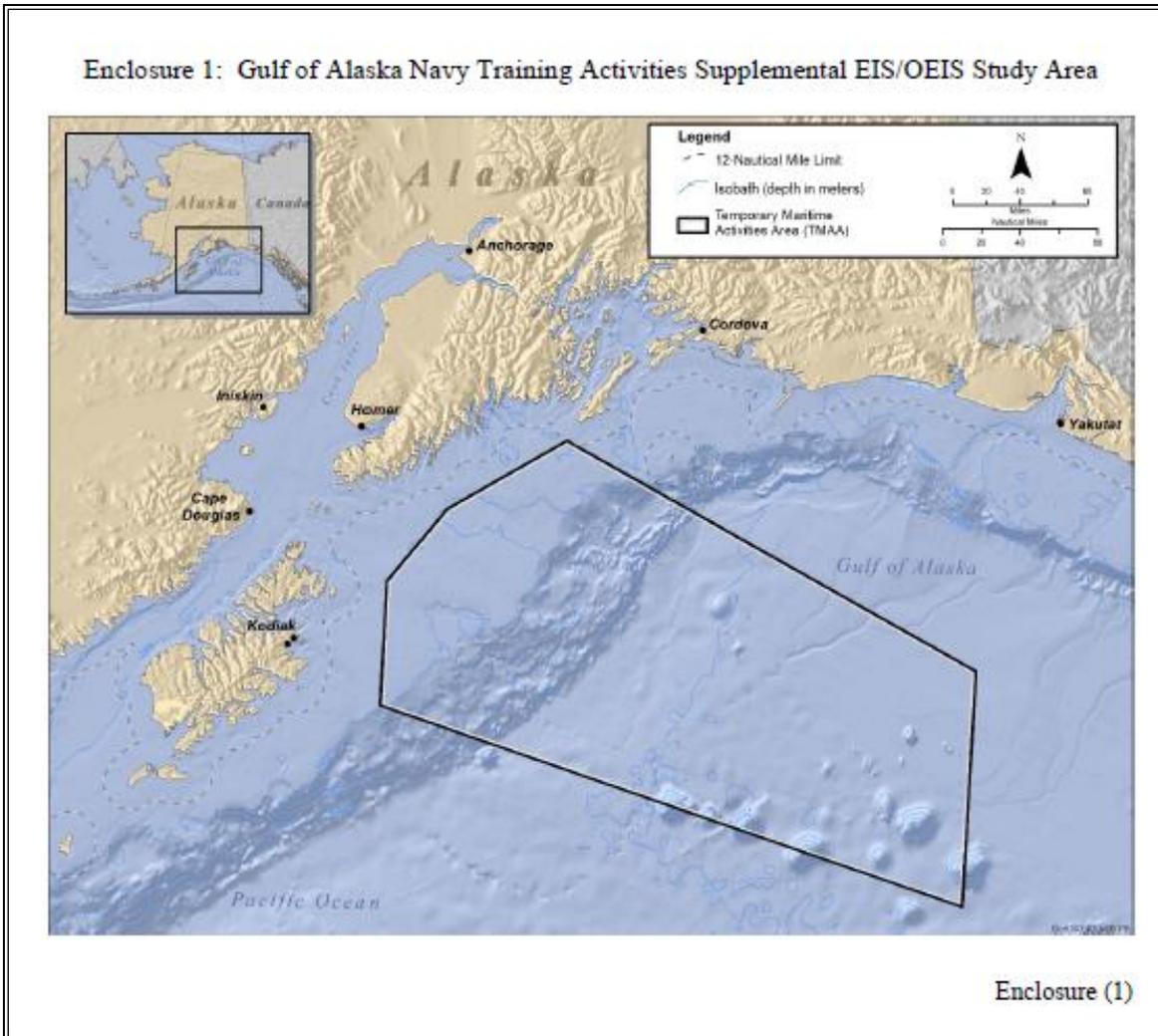
Please help the Navy inform the community about the intent to prepare a Supplemental EIS/OEIS for Navy training activities in the GOA by sharing this information with your staff and interested individuals.

Sincerely,



D. A. MCNAIR
Director, Environmental Readiness Division
By direction of the Commander

Enclosure: 1. GOA Navy Training Activities Supplemental EIS/OEIS Study Area





DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDER
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
250 MAKALAPA DRIVE
PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII 96860-3131

IN REPLY REFER TO:
5090
Ser N46B/1357
December 2, 2020

The Honorable Conrad Peterson
Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor
P.O. Box 62
Old Harbor, AK 99643

Dear President Peterson:

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE GULF OF ALASKA NAVY TRAINING
ACTIVITIES DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT/OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

In recognition of our government-to-government responsibilities, I am writing to inform you that the Department of the Navy (Navy) has prepared a draft supplement to the 2011 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Navy Training Activities Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) (referred to as the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS) and the 2016 GOA Navy Training Activities Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS (referred to as the 2016 GOA Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS). In the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS, the Navy assesses the potential environmental effects associated with continuing periodic military readiness activities in the GOA Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) (Enclosure 1). These activities include the use of active sound navigation and ranging, known as sonar, and weapon systems that may use non-explosive or explosive munitions at sea. The Navy would continue to implement mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential impacts on marine species and the environment from training activities. The Navy is requesting your comments on the analysis, including potential environmental issues, cultural resource concerns, and tribal/Alaska Native issues.

The Navy understands the challenging times our world and nation face with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact it has had on our governments and communities. It is times like these that the readiness of our military forces becomes even more critical. Our service members need to be prepared for a wide range of potential situations, from combat to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

The Navy's Proposed Action is to continue periodic military training activities within the GOA TMAA. Proposed training activities are similar to those that have occurred in the GOA TMAA for decades. The geographic extent of the GOA TMAA and Proposed Action, including the location, number, and frequency of major training exercises, remain unchanged from the 2016 GOA Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Although the types of activities and number of events in the Proposed Action are the same as in previous documents (Alternative 1 in both the 2011

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December 2, 2020

and 2016 impact analyses), there have been changes in the platforms and systems used in those activities. For example, the EA-6B aircraft and frigate, and their associated systems, have been replaced by the EA-18G aircraft, Littoral Combat Ship, and Destroyer. The Supplemental EIS/OEIS includes the analysis of at-sea training activities projected to meet readiness requirements beyond 2022 and into the reasonably foreseeable future, and reflects the most up-to-date compilation of training activities deemed necessary to accomplish military readiness during that time period.

The Navy is preparing a Supplemental EIS/OEIS to renew required federal regulatory permits and authorizations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. Current federal regulatory permits and authorizations expire in April 2022. The Supplemental EIS/OEIS supports naval training requirements to achieve and maintain fleet readiness as required by Title 10 of the U.S. Code. In the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS, the Navy has updated the 2011 and 2016 impact analyses with new information and analytical methods the Navy developed and has used since 2016. New information includes an updated acoustic effects model, updated marine mammal density data and sea turtle hearing criteria, and other emergent best available science. In those analyses, the Navy concluded submerged cultural resources would not be impacted because of the type of training activities and the low density of submerged cultural resources within the area of effect.

Due to COVID-19 conditions, including travel and public event restrictions, the Navy has included a CD-ROM of the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS and project fact sheet booklet in this mailing (Enclosures 2 and 3), and is holding virtual public meetings, consisting of a presentation and question and answer session, to discuss the Proposed Action and the draft environmental impact analysis. Visit www.GOAEIS.com/VPM to learn more about and attend a virtual public meeting. An audio-only option will also be available.

Tuesday, January 19, 2021
3 to 4 p.m. Alaska Standard Time

Wednesday, February 3, 2021
5 to 6 p.m. Alaska Standard Time

Substantive questions for discussion with Navy representatives at the virtual public meetings can be submitted between January 11 and 18 for the January 19 meeting, and between January 26 and February 2 for the February 3 meeting. Email questions to projectmanager@goaeis.com or complete the form at www.GOAEIS.com.

The Navy will accept comments throughout the public comment period from December 11, 2020, to February 16, 2021. To be considered in the development of the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS, all comments must be postmarked or received online by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time February 16, 2021. All comments submitted during the comment period will become part of the public record, and substantive comments will be addressed in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

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Ser N46B/1357
December 2, 2020

Comments may be submitted online at www.GOAEIS.com or by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest
Attention: GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager
1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

If you would like additional information about the project or need assistance attending the virtual public meetings, please contact Ms. Kimberly Kler, GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager, at projectmanager@goaeis.com.

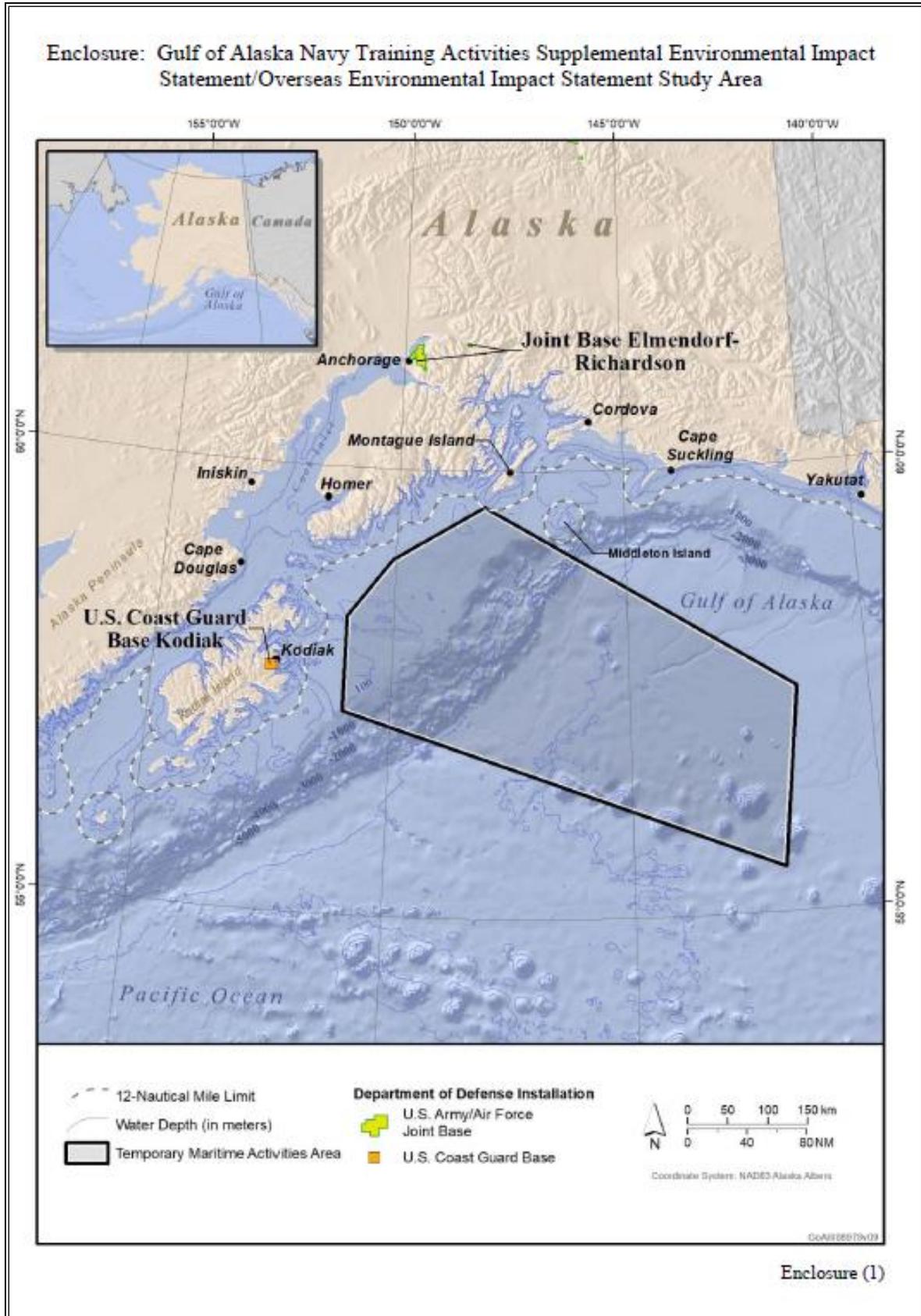
Please help the Navy inform the community about the availability of the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS and virtual public meetings by sharing this information with your staff and interested individuals.

Sincerely,



A. K. HUTCHISON
Captain, U.S. Navy
By direction of the Commander

- Enclosure:
1. Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement Study Area
 2. Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (CD-ROM)
 3. Project fact sheet booklet





DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING SYSTEMS COMMAND NORTHWEST
1101 TAUTOG CIRCLE
SILVERDALE, WASHINGTON 98315-1101

5090
Ser N45/20-00568
03 Dec 2020

The Honorable Conrad Peterson
Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor
PO Box 62
Old Harbor, AK, 99643

Dear President Peterson,

**SUBJECT: INVITATION TO GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION
FOR CONTINUATION OF U.S. NAVY GULF OF ALASKA TEMPORARY
MARITIME ACTIVITIES AREA**

Consistent with the Department of the Navy's government-to-government responsibilities, I would like to inform you that the Navy is preparing a Supplement to the 2011 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) and 2016 GOA Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. This update will reevaluate potential impacts from ongoing military training activities conducted in the GOA Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA). The National Marine Fisheries Service is a cooperating agency for this Supplemental EIS/OEIS due to the issuance of federal regulatory permits and authorizations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act.

Please find attached the Notice of Intent to study the environmental effects of this proposed action, as published in the Federal Register on February 10, 2020 (Enclosure 1). Additional information is available on the project website at www.GOAEIS.com. For your convenience, I have attached the letter previously sent to you on January 24, 2020, discussing the Notice of Intent to develop the Supplemental EIS/OEIS (enclosure 2).

The Navy's Proposed Action and Study Area, the TMAA, is the same as presented in the 2011 GOA Final EIS/OEIS and the 2016 GOA Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. The Supplemental EIS/OEIS will re-assess, based on the current best available science, the potential environmental effects associated with ongoing and future at-sea military readiness activities conducted within the TMAA beyond 2022. The types of activities and level of events in the Proposed Action are the same as Alternative 1 in the previous documents, and include the continued use of active sonar and weapons systems that may use non-explosive or explosive munitions at sea. These activities would be performed while employing marine species mitigation measures.

Although the Supplement to the 2011 and 2016 EIS/OEIS is in development, it is expected to be available for review and comment later this month. I invite you to review the

**SUBJECT: INVITATION TO GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION
FOR CONTINUATION OF U.S. NAVY GULF OF ALASKA TEMPORARY
MARITIME ACTIVITIES AREA**

information provided in the enclosures as well as on the project website noted above, and to evaluate whether you believe there may be a potential for this action to significantly affect tribal treaty harvest rights, resources, or lands. As these actions are a continuation of past activities, the Navy does not expect any significant impacts on tribal resources and rights, or changes in the availability of the species or stocks for the tribe's subsistence use, including the subsistence harvest of marine mammals. This invitation is made pursuant to Federal Indian Policy and the Navy's policy for government-to-government consultation with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes.

In accordance with Navy policy, I would like to offer the opportunity to have the Navy brief you or your staff on the proposed training activities. If you believe there would be a potential to significantly affect tribal treaty rights or resources resulting from the implementation of the proposed action, and would like to initiate government-to-government consultation, the Navy will continue consultation with your tribe beyond the initial briefing. I respectfully request a reply within 45 days after receipt of this letter.

If you have questions or concerns, or require further information please contact me directly at (360) 396-0043 or edward.miller@navy.mil, the Navy Region Tribal Liaison, Danielle Page-Pattison (360) 315-5400 or danielle.page@navy.mil, or the Project Manager, John Mosher at (360) 257-3234 or john.g.mosher@navy.mil.

Sincerely,



E. B. MILLER
Captain, CEC, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer

Enclosures: 1. Notice of Intent
2. Notice of Intent Letter

E.2 Example Correspondence Letters Sent to Alaska Native Federally Recognized Tribes for the Supplement to the 2020 Gulf of Alaska Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Impact Statement



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
250 MAKALAPA DRIVE
PEARL HARBOR HI 96860-3131

IN REPLY REFER TO:
5090
Ser N46/0113
January 25, 2022

The Honorable Al Cratty, Sr.
Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor
P.O. Box 62
Old Harbor, AK 99643

Dear President Cratty, Sr.:

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE A SUPPLEMENT TO THE GULF OF ALASKA NAVY TRAINING ACTIVITIES DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The U.S. Navy is preparing a Supplement to the December 2020 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Navy Training Activities Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS). This Supplement will address a change in the Study Area and the addition of a new Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area.

Since the release of the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS on December 11, 2020 and based on the latest Northern Edge Exercise 2021, the Navy recognized that the size and shape of the GOA Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) no longer provides sufficient space for the realistic maneuvering of vessels and aircraft during training exercises. Proposed changes to the Study Area include additional airspace and sea space to the west and south of the TMAA. The additional area is referred to as the Western Maneuver Area consisting of approximately 185,806 square nautical miles (see Enclosure 1). This additional space enables Navy personnel and units to practice more realistic, complex training scenarios in a safer, more efficient manner that would better prepare them to respond to real-world incidents. The TMAA (approximately 42,146 square nautical miles) remains unchanged and any activities involving active sonar or explosives would as in the past occur in this area only. The Navy is not proposing new or increased training activities in the Western Maneuver Area, only an expansion of the area the Navy may use for vessel and aircraft maneuvering purposes during exercises. The number of vessels, aircraft, underway steaming hours, events, and flight times remains the same.

In response to agency, tribal, and public comments, the Navy also proposes implementing a new mitigation area within the continental shelf and shelf slope area of the TMAA (approximately 14,600 square nautical miles). The Navy would restrict the use of explosives during training (up to 10,000 feet altitude) in this area to protect marine species and biologically important habitat. The Navy anticipates the implementation of the proposed mitigation area would minimize impacts on marine mammals, fish, and marine birds, positively effecting marine species, fisheries, Alaska Native tribes, the regional economy, and the people of Alaska.

5090
Ser N46/0113
January 25, 2022

The Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS is expected to be available for public review and comment in March 2022. Previously submitted comments do not need to be resubmitted as public comments received during the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS comment period (December 11, 2020 – February 16, 2021) are still valid and are being considered in the development of the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

If you would like additional information about the project or would like to schedule a briefing, please contact Ms. Kimberly Kler, GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager, at projectmanager@goaeis.com. Please also visit the project website at www.GOAEIS.com to learn more about the overall project and the Supplement. The Navy will continue to inform and engage the public, stakeholders, and Alaska Native tribes throughout the National Environmental Policy Act process.

We request your help to inform the community about the upcoming release of the Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS by sharing this information with your staff and interested individuals.

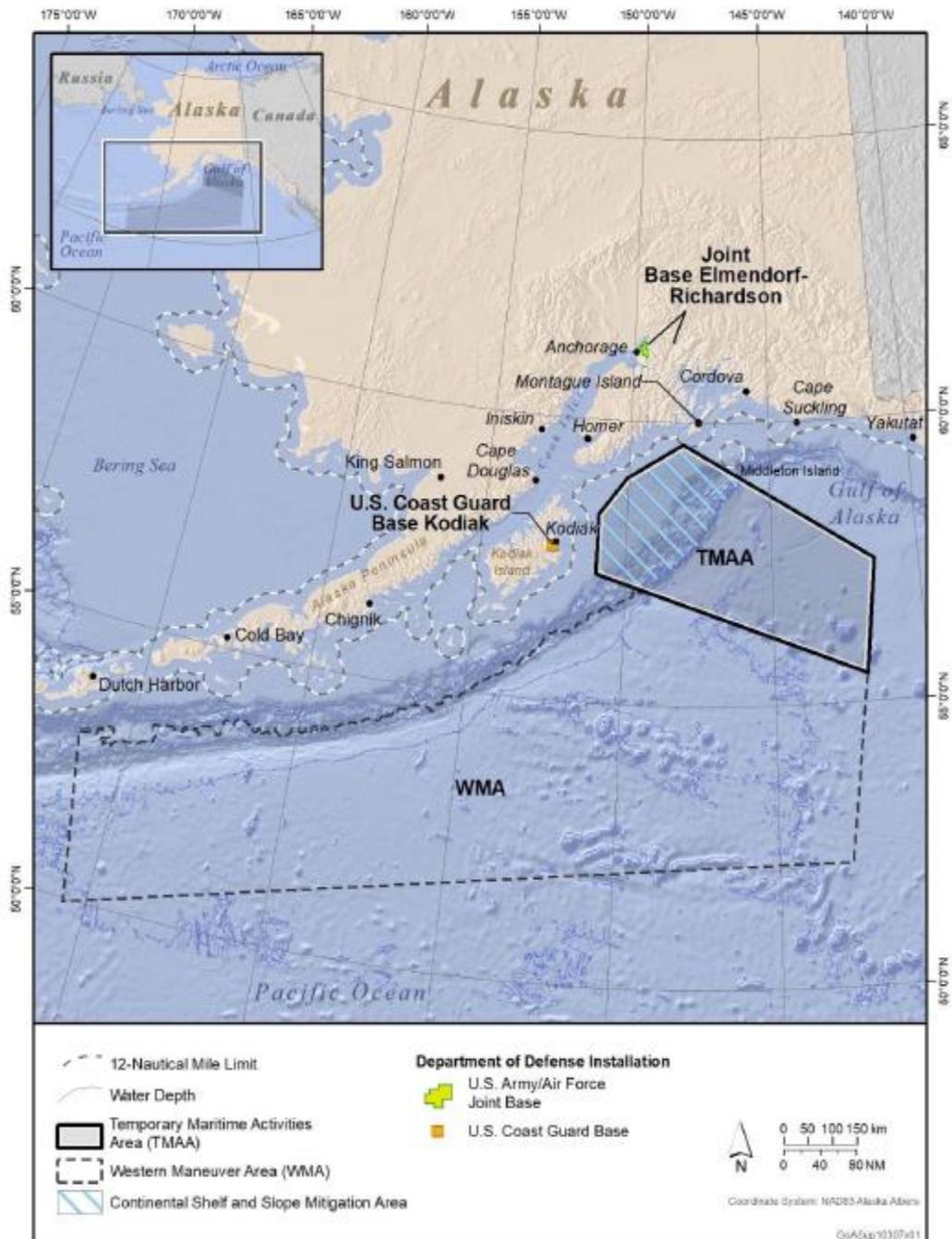
Sincerely,



A. K. HUTCHISON
Captain, U.S. Navy
By direction

Enclosure: 1. Proposed Changes to the Study Area and New Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS

Enclosure 1: Proposed Changes to the Study Area and New Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement



Enclosure (1)



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
250 MAKALAPA DRIVE
PEARL HARBOR HI 96860-3131

IN REPLY REFER TO:
5090
Ser N46/0271
March 11, 2022

The Honorable Al Cratty, Sr.
Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor
P.O. Box 62
Old Harbor, AK 99643

Dear President Cratty, Sr.:

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE 2020 GULF OF ALASKA NAVY TRAINING ACTIVITIES DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The U.S. Navy has prepared a Supplement to the December 2020 Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Navy Training Activities Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS), which is now available for review and comment. The Supplement addresses a change in the Study Area and the addition of a new Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area. The Navy welcomes your comments on the Supplement.

Since the release of the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS on December 11, 2020, and completion of the Northern Edge 2021 exercise, the Navy recognized that the size and shape of the GOA Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) no longer provides sufficient space for the realistic maneuvering of vessels and aircraft during training exercises. Proposed changes to the Study Area include additional airspace and sea space to the west and south of the TMAA. The area is referred to as the Western Maneuver Area and adds approximately 185,806 square nautical miles to the Study Area (see enclosure 1). This additional space would enable Navy personnel and units to practice more realistic, complex training scenarios in a safer, more efficient manner that would better prepare them to respond to real-world incidents. The TMAA (approximately 42,146 square nautical miles) would remain unchanged and any activities involving active sonar or explosives would, as in the past, occur in this area only. The Navy is not proposing new or increased number of training activities in the Western Maneuver Area, only an expansion of the area the Navy may use for vessel and aircraft maneuvering purposes during exercises. The number of vessels, aircraft, underway steaming hours, events, and flight times remains the same. Although the Study Area has expanded, the conclusions regarding potential impacts have not significantly changed from the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

In response to agency, tribal, and public comments, the Navy also proposes implementing a new mitigation area within the continental shelf and slope area of the TMAA (approximately 14,600 square nautical miles). The Navy would expand its mitigation measures for explosives detonated at or near the surface and prohibit the use of explosives during training (up to 10,000 feet altitude) in this area to protect marine species and biologically important habitat. The Navy

5090
Ser N46/0271
March 11, 2022

anticipates the implementation of the proposed mitigation area would reduce impacts on marine mammals, fishes, and marine birds.

The Supplement is available on the project website at www.GOAEIS.com, as well as a list of public locations with printed copies of the document. If you need assistance accessing the document, please contact Ms. Julianne Stanford, Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Office, at julianne.e.stanford.civ@us.navy.mil or 360-867-8525. If you would like additional information or to schedule a project briefing, please contact Ms. Kimberly Kler, GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager, at projectmanager@goaeis.com.

The Navy is accepting comments on the Supplement throughout the public comment period from March 18, 2022, to May 2, 2022. To be considered in the development of the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS, comments must be postmarked or received online by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time May 2, 2022. All comments submitted during the comment period will become part of the public record and substantive comments will be addressed in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Public comments received during the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS comment period are still valid; previously submitted comments do not need to be resubmitted.

Comments may be submitted online at www.GOAEIS.com or by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Northwest
Attention: GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager
1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

Please visit the project website at www.GOAEIS.com to learn more about the overall project and the Supplement. The Navy will continue to inform and engage the public, stakeholders, and Alaska Native tribes throughout the National Environmental Policy Act process. We also request your help to inform the community about the availability of the Supplement by sharing this information with your staff and interested individuals.

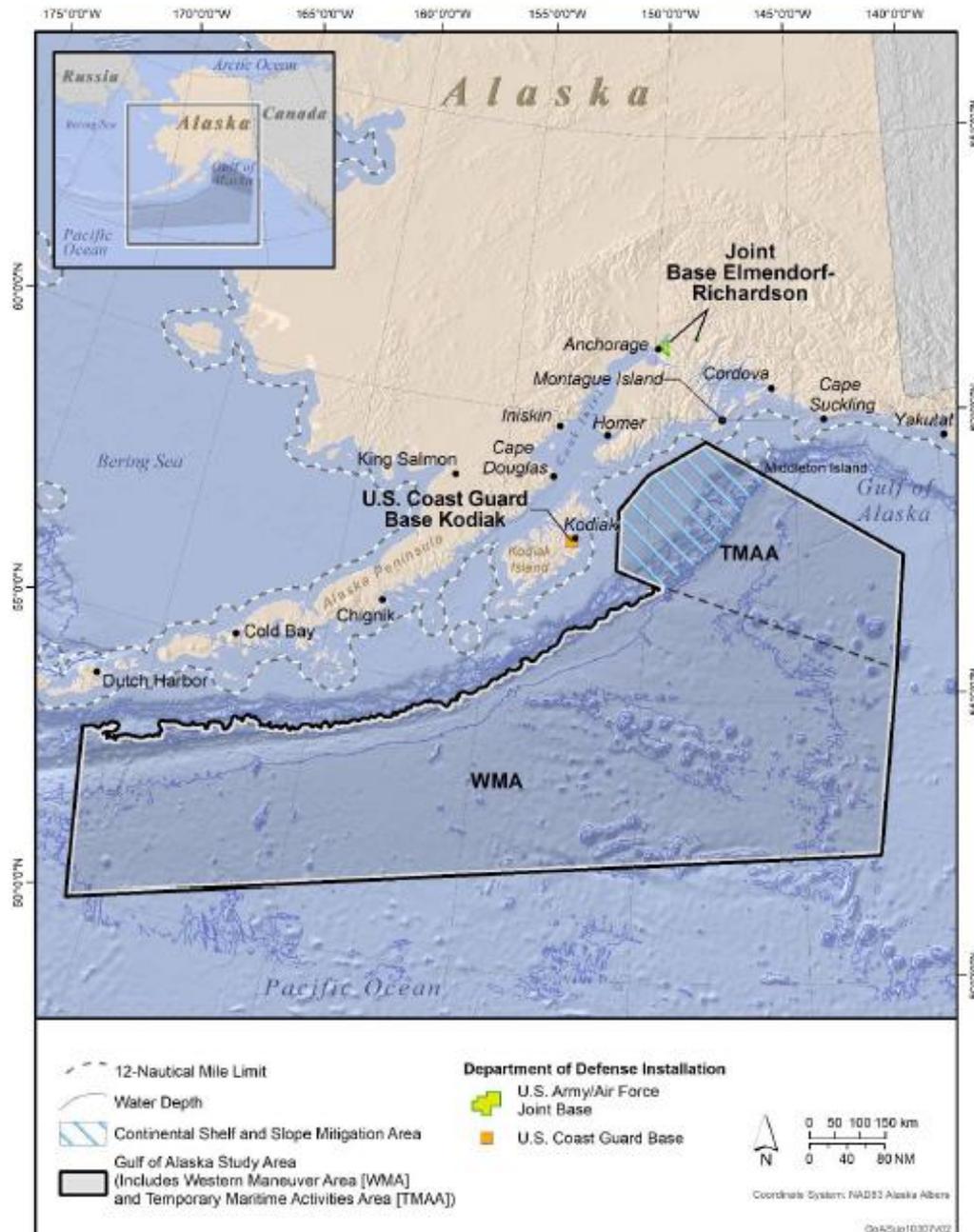
Sincerely,



A. K. HUTCHISON
Captain, U.S. Navy
By direction

Enclosure: 1. Proposed Changes to the Study Area and New Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS

Enclosure 1: Proposed Changes to the Study Area and New Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area for the Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Supplement to the 2020 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement



Enclosure (1)

E.3 National Marine Fisheries Service Response Letter



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

August 11, 2022

Captain A. K. Hutchison
Department of the Navy
United States Pacific Fleet
250 Makalapa Drive
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii 96860-3131

Re: Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Exercises AKRO-2022-01740

Dear CAPT Hutchison:

Thank you for notifying us about the above referenced project from the U.S. Department of the Navy, Pacific Fleet (Navy) in an email dated June 28, 2022. This letter replaces the previous version we sent to you dated July 25, 2002. We provide clarification on the timing of the training exercises in the project description.

The purpose of the proposed action is to conduct an annual exercise, historically referred to as Northern Edge, over a time period of up to 21 consecutive days during the April to October timeframe. The Navy's activities will continue for the foreseeable future, while the MMPA authorization will be effective December 2022 through December 2029. These training activities are deemed necessary to accomplish military readiness requirements in support of protecting the United States against its potential adversaries, protecting and defending the rights of the United States and its allies to move freely on the oceans, and providing humanitarian assistance.

Training activities in the GOA will take place in the Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) and Western Maneuver Area (WMA). The TMAA is unchanged from the proposed activities identified in the 2011 GOA Final Environmental Impact Statement and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) and the 2016 GOA Supplemental EIS/OEIS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a, 2016). The TMAA is a primary component of the Alaska training area and serves as a surface, undersea space, and airspace maneuver area within the GOA for ships, submarines, and aircraft to conduct required training activities.

The WMA is a large, off-shelf area to the southwest of the TMAA covering approximately 185,806 nm². This additional area to the proposed training activities project plan substantially expands the overall training area relative to previous consultations. However, there are no new or increased levels of training activities, no increases in vessel numbers or underway steaming hours, and no increases in aircraft events to the proposed actions. The vast majority of training activities are still planned to occur in the TMAA.

The proposed action consists of Navy training activities associated with conducting large-scale joint force exercises, including Anti-Submarine Warfare activities and the use of active sonar. These exercises would each last up to 21 days between April and October, and would consist of multiple component training activities (U.S. Department of the Navy 2011a, 2016). The scope of

ALASKA REGION - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/alaska>



activities conducted in the WMA would be limited to vessel movements and aircraft training, and several training events associated with these movements (U.S. Department of the Navy 2022). No activities using active acoustics or explosives would occur in the WMA but those events would still occur in the TMAA.

Section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act require federal agencies to consult with us on all actions that may adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH) and other aquatic resources. The EFH consultation process is guided by the requirements of our EFH regulation at 50 CFR 600 Subpart K, which mandates the preparation of EFH assessments and generally outlines each agency's obligations in this consultation process. In support of this consultation process, you provided a notice of the proposed action, an EFH assessment, and your agency's conclusion regarding impacts on EFH. We offer the following comments on this project pursuant to the above referenced regulatory process.

Essential Fish Habitat

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has identified EFH for nearshore marine waters in the vicinity of the TMAA and WMA to include EFH for all five species of Pacific salmon (NPFMC 2021). There are no anadromous rivers in the project area. The proposed project location is designated as EFH for 27 species of groundfish and scallops (NPFMC 2020, 2014).

Assessment of Effects to EFH

The Navy analyzed the effects of the proposed action on designated EFH and concluded that the proposed action would have either a "no adverse effect" or a "may adversely affect" determination, but adverse effects would be minimal in scale, and range in duration from a temporary to permanent impact, depending on the stressor type and habitat affected. Adverse impacts to EFH may include explosive/noise stressors as well as military expended materials and explosive byproducts being present in portions of the water column. Federal regulations define an adverse effect as "any impact which reduces the quality and/or quantity of EFH" (50 CFR 600.810(a)). Based on our review of the project plans and the information provided, we agree with your conclusion that potential adverse effects to EFH would be minimal and temporary in nature.

Changes to the proposed training exercise activities resulted in the exclusion of the following actions: Sinking Exercise (SINKEX), Portable Undersea Tracking Range on the seafloor, and Tracking Exercises with explosive sonobuoys. The removal of these training activities as well as the addition of a Continental Shelf and Slope Mitigation Area, which prohibits the use of explosives from the sea surface up to 10,000 feet altitude during training over the entire continental shelf and slope out to the 4,000 meter depth contour of the TMAA, significantly avoids adverse effects to EFH.

These changes, as well as our early coordination effort, proved beneficial to the consultation process. Proactive engagement early in the planning process allowed us a better understanding of your proposed actions and mitigation measures. Therefore, we have no additional conservation recommendations for the proposed action and additional EFH consultation is not necessary.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this action. Significant changes to the project may require reinitiating a consultation. Additional information regarding the EFH consultation process can be found in our [EFH Fact Sheet](#) and our [Regional website](#), where you can find FAQs. Charlene Felkley charlene.felkley@noaa.gov is available to answer questions or discuss further actions.

Sincerely,



Gretchen Harrington
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Habitat Conservation

cc: Andrea Balla-Holden, andrea.n.balla-holden.civ@us.navy.mil
Chris Hunt, christopher.e.hunt13.civ@us.navy.mil
John Mosher, john.g.mosher.civ@us.navy.mil
Ron Salz, ron.salz@noaa.gov
Leah Davis, leah.davis@noaa.gov

References

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E.4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Response Letter

From: Spegon, Jennifer <jennifer_j_spegon@fws.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 3:52 PM
To: Kler, Kimberly H CIV USN (USA)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement, Gulf of Alaska, Alaska

Ms. Kimberly Kler

Thank you for your letter, January 24, 2020, indicating the Department of the Navy's (Navy's) proposal to continue military training activities in the Gulf of Alaska, and the Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement as posted in the Federal Register, February 10, 2020.

The letter indicates the Navy is not proposing new activities or an increase from current levels. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) previously reviewed these activities under Consultation 07CAAN00-2010-I-0075 and 07CAAN00-2010-I-0075-R001. It appears there are no changes to the previous activities, the geographic parameters, or levels of activities occurring in the area previously subject to consultation with the Service. If this is case then, reinitiation of consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act would not be required. Our previous findings discussed in those consultations remain valid.

However, if new information reveals project impacts that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered, or if this action is subsequently modified in a manner which was not previously considered, section 7 consultation must be reinitiated.

Thank you for your coordination in meeting our joint responsibilities under the ESA. For more information or if you have any questions please contact me at the number below.

Thank you,
Jennifer Spegon

Jennifer Spegon
Ecological Services
Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, AK 99507
Phone: (907) 271-2768
FAX: (907) 271-2786
jennifer_j_spegon@fws.gov

E.5 Alaska State Historic Preservation Office Concurrence Letter

From: [Kler, Kimberly H CIV USN \(USA\)](#)
To: [Samuelson, Marya K](#)
Cc: [anna.bausher](#)
Subject: FW: Navy decision regarding NHPA and GOA Phase III (File No 3130-IR NAVY)
Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 4:03:53 PM

Marya,

Please see the below email chain for updating the FSEIS V2. Section 106 is completed.

v/r
Kimberly

From: Grant, David M CIV USN COMNAVREG NW BGR WA (USA) <david.m.grant20.civ@us.navy.mil>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 14:57
To: Page-Pattison, Danielle M CIV USN NAVFAC NW SVD WA (USA) <danielle.m.page-pattison.civ@us.navy.mil>; Mosher, John G CIV USN COMPACFLT PEARL HI (USA) <john.g.mosher.civ@us.navy.mil>; Kler, Kimberly H CIV USN (USA) <kimberly.h.kler.civ@us.navy.mil>
Cc: Harris, Nina M CIV USN NAVFAC NW SVD WA (USA) <nina.m.harris1@navy.mil>
Subject: FW: Navy decision regarding NHPA and GOA Phase III (File No 3130-IR NAVY)

All,

Here is AK SHPO's response to our notification GOA Phase III is not subject to Section 106.

I understand that the situation may change, but for now please see below and forward as appropriate to ensure this enters the admin record.

Thank you

Dave
206-697-4668

From: Meitl, Sarah J (DNR) <sarah.meitl@alaska.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 12:47 PM
To: dave.m.grant <dave.m.grant@navy.mil>
Cc: Meitl, Sarah J (DNR) <sarah.meitl@alaska.gov>
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] RE: Navy decision regarding NHPA and GOA Phase III (File No 3130-IR NAVY)

3130-1R Navy / 2020-00169

Hi Dave,

Thank you for sending a summary statement about the project's history and the status of the project's Section 106 consultation. Our office has no objections to the Navy's determination that

Section 106 compliance is not necessary for GOA Phase III actions. We look forward to continuing to consult on undertakings in Alaska and thank you again for doing your best to build a good relationship with our office.

Best,
Sarah

Sarah Meitl
Review and Compliance Coordinator
Alaska State Historic Preservation Office
Office of History and Archaeology

550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310
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Direct: 907-269-8720

sarah.meitl@alaska.gov
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha>

Teleworking - Email is the best method of communication.

From: Grant, David M CIV USN COMNAVREG NW BGR WA (USA) <dave.m.grant@navy.mil>

Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2021 8:45 AM

To: Meitl, Sarah J (DNR) <sarah.meitl@alaska.gov>

Subject: Navy decision regarding NHPA and GOA Phase III (File No 3130-IR NAVY)

Hello Sarah

Based on our prior e-mails and conversations, the intent of this e-mail is to notify the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer of the Navy's determination that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act does not apply to the latest phase (Phase III) of training activities in the Gulf of Alaska (<https://goaeis.com>).

You pointed out that agencies are under no obligation to notify your office if there is no undertaking or Section 106 otherwise does not apply. If there were any question or concern, however, you recommended providing an e-mail or letter to which you could respond and the exchange can be added to the administrative record. While there is no ambiguity or concerns, per se, we wish to provide this notification to document Navy's determination because Section 106 consultation was conducted for GOA in 2011. For GOA Phase II, minor adjustments to training activities did not change the area of potential effects or the undertaking's potential to affect historic properties and via correspondence with your office the Navy confirmed additional Section 106 consultation was not warranted. In view of the prior consultation and communication, questions may arise on why the Navy is not currently consulting for Phase III.

For GOA Phase III, the Navy proposes to continue periodic military training activities within the Gulf of Alaska. Proposed training activities are similar to those that have occurred in the area for

decades.

However, earlier phases were Section 106 undertakings and subject to consultation (File No 3130-IR Navy) due to associated aircraft flights over AK airspace. Those activities are now separate from GOA and subject to separate assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act and NHPA consultation that was conducted by the Air Force associated with the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex Modernization and Enhancement Environmental Impact Statement, completed in June 2013 (File No 3130-IR Air Force).

All the Navy Phase III training activities are limited to areas beyond the 12 nautical mile territorial limits with the exception of transit flights to and from the Gulf of Alaska Temporary Maritime Activities Area or TMAA (see attached) and inland military bases or training areas. These transit flights occur at high altitudes of approximately 15,000 feet, following established Federal Aviation Administration routes and air traffic control direction.

Accordingly, it is the Navy's position that while Section 106 of the NHPA may apply to other federal agencies with control of or jurisdiction over activities on the Outer Continental Shelf and/or the Exclusive Economic Zone, Section 106 does not apply to the proposed training activities associated with this third phase of GOA training activities.

Also, per Section 402 and its two requirements that federal undertakings take into account adverse effects on sites inscribed on the World Heritage List or on a foreign nation's equivalent of the National Register, the Navy confirmed there are no World Heritage sites in the TMAA and the second requirement is inapplicable.

We would appreciate you entering this e-mail into your 3130-IR Navy file and providing a response for our administrative record.

If you require additional information, please contact me and I will work with our team to provide answers.

Thank you
Dave

David Grant
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360-396-0919 (office)
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