

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

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PAUL J. COTE, JR.
COMMISSIONER

November 27, 2006

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic
Attn: Code EV21, (Atlantic Fleet Sonar PM)
6505 Hampton Blvd.
Norfolk, VA 23508-1278

To Whom It May Concern:

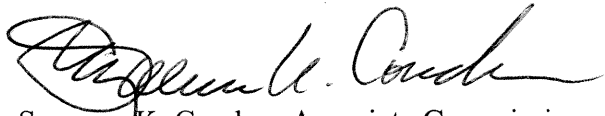
Captain J.M. Hinson's letter to Paul Cote, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), regarding the Navy's preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) for the Atlantic Fleet Active Sonar Training along the East Coast of the United States and the Gulf of Mexico was forwarded to my office for response.

Based on the information provided in the Agency Scoping Package and on the Navy's EIS/OEIS website, it appears that the proposed "Boston Complex" study area spans a large portion of the Massachusetts coast line. While there has been some research conducted regarding the use of sonar and possible effects to marine life and divers, the MDPH Center for Environmental Health (CEH) anticipates receiving numerous public inquiries about possible impacts associated with both commercial and recreational use of the ocean in areas impacted. The MDPH/CEH is responsible for regulating various aspects of marine use (e.g. beach contamination issues, fish advisories, etc.) and we will likely receive public inquiries about potential impacts that could be associated with marine activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, shell-fishing, and/or changes in fish stock that could potentially change human consumption patterns. Therefore, it would be very helpful to our agency if the EIS/OEIS and/or the Navy could assist us by

providing information regarding the potential on-shore and off-shore human health impacts associated with use of sonar in marine waters. This information will greatly assist the MDPH/CEH in our ability to respond to these anticipated public inquiries.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments during the EIS/OEIS scoping period. Please feel free to contact us should you wish to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,



Suzanne K. Condon, Associate Commissioner
Center for Environmental Health

Cc: Paul Cote, Commissioner, MDPH
Martha Steele, Deputy Director, MDPH/CEH
Meg Blanchet, Assistant Director, MDPH/CEH Environmental Toxicology Program
J. M. Hinson. Capt, USN, Director, Fleet Training, Department of the Navy