

I - 003

March 25, 2008

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic Division  
Attention: Code EV22 (Atlantic Fleet Sonar Project Manager)

Norfolk, VA

Re: AFAST EIS

Dear Atlantic Fleet Sonar Project Manager:

I am deeply concerned about the use of active sonar along the Atlantic Coast of the United States as described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) for Atlantic Fleet Active Sonar Training (AFAST).

[<sup>684</sup>The links between the use of active sonar and both acute and cumulative harm to the ocean ecosystem and marine life cannot be ignored. [<sup>685</sup>Following US Navy Atlantic Fleet Active Sonar Training activities in January 2005, thirty-six (36) whales were stranded on the beaches of North Carolina's Outer Banks. In March 2007, again subsequent to sonar activities, a Blainsville beaked whale was stranded with injury to both ears evidenced by bleeding.]

My concern about the biological effects of sonar use extends to other marine mammals, sea turtles, finfish, invertebrates, and even humans. [<sup>691</sup>To my knowledge, scientific study has not demonstrated that active sonar is safe for fish populations. Rather, there is strong evidence that at least some fish species use sound for important life functions and could be significantly disrupted by military active sonar.] For this reason, [<sup>694</sup>I am deeply concerned about the real possibility that the use of active sonar as described in the DEIS for AFAST could negatively impact North Carolina's recreational and commercial fishing industries, which are essential to the health of my state's economy.]

Given the plethora of not only unanswered but altogether uninvestigated questions about the short- and long-term effects of active sonar on marine species, North Carolina's fisheries, and the ocean environment, [<sup>696</sup>it is unclear why the Navy is proposing a fixed sonar range (the USWTR) before it has answered the many questions and comments from the public about the Atlantic Fleet Active Sonar Training. Both the spirit and letter of NEPA and the APA direct that all proposals for active sonar activities and projects off our state's coast be put forth in a single Environmental Impact Statement for comprehensive public comment.]

Please address these concerns and include my comments in the current AFAST EIS.

Sincerely,



Dorothee A. Alsentzer

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Charlotte, NC