

Comparative Print: Changes in Existing Law for Bill number:

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Summary

- (1) 89 amendments.
- (2) 0 automated notifications.

Current Law(s) being amended

- [1. Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972](#)
- [2. Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023](#)

Comparative Print: Changes in Existing Law

1. Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972

[As Amended Through P.L. 117–286, Enacted December 27,
2022]

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Sec. 2. FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF POLICY The Congress finds that—

(1) certain species and population stocks of marine mammals are, or may be, in danger of extinction or depletion as a result of man's activities;

(2) such species and population stocks should not be permitted to diminish beyond the point at which they cease to be a significant functioning element in the ecosystem of which they are a part, and, consistent with this major objective, they should not be permitted to diminish below their optimum sustainable population. Further measures should be immediately taken to replenish any species or population stock which has already diminished below that population. In particular, efforts should be made to protect essential habitats, including the rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance for each species of marine mammal from the adverse effect of man's actions;

(3) there is inadequate knowledge of the ecology and population dynamics of such marine mammals and of the factors which bear upon their ability to reproduce themselves successfully;

(4) negotiations should be undertaken immediately to encourage the development of international arrangements for research on, and conservation of, all marine mammals;

(5) marine mammals and marine mammal products either—

(A) move in interstate commerce, or

(B) affect the balance of marine ecosystems in a manner which is important to other animals and animal products which move in interstate commerce,

and that the protection and conservation of marine mammals and their habitats is therefore necessary to insure the continuing availability of those products which move in interstate commerce; ~~and~~

(6) marine mammals have proven themselves to be resources of great international significance, esthetic and recreational as well as economic, and it is the sense of the Congress that they should be protected and encouraged to develop to the greatest extent feasible commensurate with sound policies of resource management and that the primary objective of their management should be to maintain the health and stability of the marine ecosystem. Whenever consistent with this primary objective, it should be the goal to obtain an optimum sustainable population keeping in mind the carrying capacity of the habitat; ~~and~~

(7) implementation of this Act has, since its enactment and subsequent revisions, unduly and unnecessarily constrained government, tribes, and the regulated community as a result of the application by the Secretary of subjective factors, including the 'precautionary principle',

when implementing this Act rather than, as intended by Congress, the objective application of the best available scientific and commercial data; and

(8) implementation and limitations of this Act have hindered some efforts to restore threatened species and endangered species, such as salmon, and have resulted in disruptions to ecosystem balance.

Sec. 3. DEFINITIONS For the purposes of this Act—

(1) The term “**depletion**” or “**depleted**” means any case in which—

(A) the Secretary, after consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and the Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals established under title II of this Act, determines that a species or population stock is below its optimum sustainable population;

(B) a State, to which authority for the conservation and management of a species or population stock is transferred under section 109, determines that such species or stock is below its optimum sustainable population; or

(C) a species or population stock is listed as an endangered species or a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

(2) The terms “**conservation**” and “**management**” mean the collection and application of biological information for the purposes of increasing and maintaining the number of animals within species and populations of marine mammals at their optimum sustainable population. Such terms include the entire scope of activities that constitute a modern scientific resource program, including, but not limited to, research, census, law enforcement, and habitat acquisition and improvement. Also included within these terms, when and where appropriate, is the periodic or total protection of species or populations as well as regulated taking.

(3) The term “**district court of the United States**” includes the District Court of Guam, District Court of the Virgin Islands, District Court of Puerto Rico, District Court of the Canal Zone, and, in the case of American Samoa and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the District Court of the United States for the District of Hawaii.

(4) The term “**humane**” in the context of the taking of a marine mammal means that method of taking which involves the least possible degree of pain and suffering practicable to the mammal involved.

(5) The term “**intermediary nation**” means a nation that exports yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products to the United States and that imports yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products that are subject to a direct ban on importation into the United States pursuant to section 101(a)(2)(B).

(6) The term “**marine mammal**” means any mammal which (A) is morphologically adapted to the marine environment (including sea otters and members of the orders Sirenia, Pinnipedia and Cetacea), or (B) primarily inhabits the marine environment (such as the polar bear); and, for the purposes of this Act, includes any part of any such marine mammal, including its raw, dressed, or dyed fur or skin.

(7) The term “**marine mammal product**” means any item of merchandise which consists, or is composed in whole or in part, of any marine mammal.

(8) The term “**moratorium**” means a complete cessation of the taking of marine mammals and a complete ban on the importation into the United States of marine mammals and marine mammal products, except as provided in this Act.

(9) The term “**optimum sustainable population**” means, with respect to any population stock, the number of animals ~~which will result in the maximum productivity~~ necessary to

support the continued survival of the population or the species, keeping in mind the carrying capacity of the habitat and the health of the ecosystem of which they form a constituent element.

(10) The term “person” includes (A) any private person or entity, and (B) any officer, employee, agent, department, or instrumentality of the Federal Government, of any State or political subdivision thereof, or of any foreign government.

(11) The term “population stock” or “stock” means a group of marine mammals of the same species or smaller taxa in a common spatial arrangement, that interbreed when mature.

(12) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term “Secretary” means—

(i) The Secretary of the department in which the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is operating, as to all responsibility, authority, funding, and duties under this Act with respect to members of the order Cetacea and members, other than walruses, of the order Pinnipedia, and

(ii) The Secretary of the Interior as to all responsibility, authority, funding, and duties under this Act with respect to all other marine mammals covered by this Act.

(B) in ¹ section 118 and title IV (other than section 408) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce.

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So in law. Should be “In”.

(13) The term “take” means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

(14) The term “United States” includes the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, Guam, and Northern Mariana Islands.

(15) The term “waters under the jurisdiction of the United States” means—

(A) the territorial sea of the United States;

(B) the waters included within a zone, contiguous to the territorial sea of the United States, of which the inner boundary is a line coterminous with the seaward boundary of each coastal State, and the other boundary is a line drawn in such a manner that each point on it is 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the territorial sea is measured; and

(C) the areas referred to as eastern special areas in Article 3(1) of the Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Maritime Boundary, signed June 1, 1990; in particular, those areas east of the maritime boundary, as defined in that Agreement, that lie within 200 nautical miles of the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea of Russia is measured but beyond 200 nautical miles of the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea of the United States is measured, except that this subparagraph shall not apply before the date on which the Agreement between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Maritime Boundary, signed June 1, 1990, enters into force for the United States.

(16) The term “fishery” means—

(A) one or more stocks of fish which can be treated as a unit for purposes of conservation and management and which are identified on the basis of geographical, scientific, technical, recreational, and economic characteristics; and

(B) any fishing for such stocks.

(17) The term “competent regional organization”—

(A) for the tuna fishery in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, means the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission; and

(B) in any other case, means an organization consisting of those nations participating in a tuna fishery, the purpose of which is the conservation and management of that fishery and the management of issues relating to that fishery.

(18) (A) The term “harassment” means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which—

(i) ~~has the potential to injure~~ *injures* a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild; or

(ii) ~~has the potential to disturb~~ *disturbs* a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering, *to the point that such behavioral patterns are abandoned or significantly and adversely altered.*

~~(B) In the case of a military readiness activity (as defined in section 315(f) of Public Law 107–314; 16 U.S.C. 703 note) or a scientific research activity conducted by or on behalf of the Federal Government consistent with section 104(e)(3), the term “harassment” means—~~

~~(i) any act that injures or has the significant potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild; or~~

~~(ii) any act that disturbs or is likely to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of natural behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, surfacing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering, to a point where such behavioral patterns are abandoned or significantly altered.~~

~~(B)~~ (B) The term “Level A harassment” means harassment described in subparagraph (A)(i) ~~or, in the case of a military readiness activity or scientific research activity described in subparagraph (B), harassment described in subparagraph (B)(i).~~

~~(B)~~ (C) The term “Level B harassment” means harassment described in subparagraph (A)(ii) ~~or, in the case of a military readiness activity or scientific research activity described in subparagraph (B), harassment described in subparagraph (B)(ii).~~

(19) The term “strategic stock” means a marine mammal stock—

(A) for which the level of ~~direct human-caused mortality exceeds the potential biological removal level;~~ *documented direct human-caused annual mortality exceeds and is expected to continue to exceed the potential biological removal level, and the potential biological removal level is not designated as unknown under paragraph (20)(B); or*

(B) which, based on the best available scientific information, is declining and is likely to be listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 within the foreseeable future; or

~~(C) which is listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), or is designated as depleted under this Act.~~

(20) The term “potential biological removal level” means the maximum number of animals, not including natural mortalities, that may be removed from a marine mammal stock while

allowing that stock to reach or maintain its optimum sustainable population. The potential biological removal level is the product of the following factors:

(A) The minimum population estimate of the stock.

(B) One-half the maximum theoretical or estimated net productivity rate of the stock at a small population size.

(C) A recovery factor of between 0.1 and 1.0.

(21) The term “**Regional Fishery Management Council**” means a Regional Fishery Management Council established under section 302 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

(22) The term “**bona fide research**” means scientific research on marine mammals, the results of which—

(A) likely would be accepted for publication in a referred scientific journal;

(B) are likely to contribute to the basic knowledge of marine mammal biology or ecology; or

(C) are likely to identify, evaluate, or resolve conservation problems.

(23) The term “**Alaska Native organization**” means a group designated by law or formally chartered which represents or consists of Indians, Aleuts, or Eskimos residing in Alaska.

(24) The term “**take reduction plan**” means a plan developed under section 118.

(25) The term “**take reduction team**” means a team established under section 118.

(26) The term “**net productivity rate**” means the annual per capita rate of increase in a stock resulting from additions due to reproduction, less losses due to mortality.

(27) The term “**minimum population estimate**” means an estimate of the number of animals in a stock that—

(A) is based on the best available scientific information on abundance, incorporating the precision and variability associated with such information; and

(B) provides reasonable assurance that the stock size is equal to or greater than the estimate.

(28) The term “**International Dolphin Conservation Program**” means the international program established by the agreement signed in LaJolla, California, in June, 1992, as formalized, modified, and enhanced in accordance with the Declaration of Panama.

(29) The term “**Declaration of Panama**” means the declaration signed in Panama City, Republic of Panama, on October 4, 1995.

(30) The term “**negligible impact**” means an impact on a marine mammal species or stock that—

(A) results directly from incidental take associated with a specified activity; and

(B) the Secretary does not reasonably expect to have a significant adverse effect on recruitment or survival rates of the species or stock, based on relevant peer-reviewed and statistically significant data.

(31) The term “**serious injury**” means, with respect to a marine mammal, a visible, physical injury that, based on relevant peer-reviewed and statistically significant data, is documented—

(A) to cause immediate mortality; or

(B) to have a delayed mortality rate of greater than 75 percent with respect to the species of such marine mammal.

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TITLE I—CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF MARINE MAMMALS

Sec. 101. MORATORIUM AND EXCEPTIONS (a) There shall be a

moratorium on the taking and importation of marine mammals and marine mammal products, commencing on the effective date of this Act, during which time no permit may be issued for the taking of any marine mammal and no marine mammal or marine mammal product may be imported into the United States except in the following cases:

(1) Consistent with the provisions of section 104, permits may be issued by the Secretary for taking, and importation for purposes of scientific research, public display, photography for educational or commercial purposes, or enhancing the survival or recovery of a species or stock, or for importation of polar bear parts (other than internal organs) taken in sport hunts in Canada. Such permits, except permits issued under section 104(c)(5), may be issued if the taking or importation proposed to be made is first reviewed by the Marine Mammal Commission and the Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals established under title II. The Commission and Committee shall recommend any proposed taking or importation, other than importation under section 104(c)(5), which is consistent with the purposes and policies of section 2 of this Act. If the Secretary issues such a permit for importation, the Secretary shall issue to the importer concerned a certificate to that effect in such form as the Secretary of the Treasury prescribes, and such importation may be made upon presentation of the certificate to the customs officer concerned.

(2) Marine mammals may be taken incidentally in the course of commercial fishing operations and permits may be issued therefor under section 104 subject to regulations prescribed by the Secretary in accordance with section 103, or in lieu of such permits, authorizations may be granted therefor under section 118, subject to regulations prescribed under that section by the Secretary without regard to section 103. Such authorizations may be granted under title III with respect to purse seine fishing for yellowfin tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, subject to regulations prescribed under that title by the Secretary without regard to section 103. In any event it shall be the immediate goal that the incidental kill or incidental serious injury of marine mammals permitted in the course of commercial fishing operations be reduced to ~~insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate~~ levels that have no more than a negligible impact on the species or stock. The Secretary of the Treasury shall ban the importation of commercial fish or products from fish which have been caught with commercial fishing technology which results in the incidental kill or incidental serious injury of ocean mammals in excess of United States standards. For purposes of applying the preceding sentence, the Secretary—

(A) shall insist on reasonable proof from the government of any nation from which fish or fish products will be exported to the United States of the effects on ocean mammals of the commercial fishing technology in use for such fish or fish products exported from such nation to the United States;

(B) in the case of yellowfin tuna harvested with purse seine nets in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, and products therefrom, to be exported to the United States, shall require that the government of the exporting nation provide documentary evidence that—

(i) (I) the tuna or products therefrom were not banned from importation under this paragraph before the effective date of section 4 of the International Dolphin Conservation Program Act; or

(II) the tuna or products therefrom were harvested after the effective date of section 4 of the International Dolphin Conservation Program Act by vessels of a nation which participates in the International Dolphin Conservation Program, and such harvesting nation is either a member of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission or has initiated (and within 6 months thereafter completed) all steps required of applicant nations, in accordance with article V, paragraph 3 of the Convention establishing the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, to become a member of that organization;

(ii) such nation is meeting the obligations of the International Dolphin Conservation Program and the obligations of membership in the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, including all financial obligations; and

(iii) the total dolphin mortality limits, and per-stock per-year dolphin mortality limits permitted for that nation's vessels under the International Dolphin Conservation Program do not exceed the limits determined for 1997, or for any year thereafter, consistent with the objective of progressively reducing dolphin mortality to a level ~~approaching zero~~ *that will have no more than a negligible impact* through the setting of annual limits and the goal of eliminating dolphin mortality, and requirements of the International Dolphin Conservation Program;

(C) shall not accept such documentary evidence if—

(i) the government of the harvesting nation does not provide directly or authorize the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission to release complete and accurate information to the Secretary in a timely manner—

(I) to allow determination of compliance with the International Dolphin Conservation Program; and

(II) for the purposes of tracking and verifying compliance with the minimum requirements established by the Secretary in regulations promulgated under subsection (f) of the Dolphin Protection Consumer Information Act (16 U.S.C. 1385(f)); or

(ii) after taking into consideration such information, findings of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, and any other relevant information, including information that a nation is consistently failing to take enforcement actions on violations which diminish the effectiveness of the International Dolphin Conservation Program, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of State, finds that the harvesting nation is not in compliance with the International Dolphin Conservation Program.

(D) shall require the government of any intermediary nation to certify and provide reasonable proof to the Secretary that it has not imported, within the preceding six months, any yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products that are subject to a direct ban on importation to the United States under subparagraph (B);

(E) shall, six months after importation of yellowfin tuna or tuna products has been banned under this section, certify such fact to the President, which certification shall be deemed to be a certification for the purposes of section 8(a) of the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967 (22 U.S.C. 1978(a)) for as long as such ban is in effect; and

(F) (i) except as provided in clause (ii), in the case of fish or products containing fish harvested by a nation whose fishing vessels engage in high seas driftnet fishing, shall require that the government of the exporting nation provide documentary evidence that the fish or fish product was not harvested with a large-scale driftnet in the South Pacific Ocean after July 1, 1991, or in any other water of the high seas after January 1, 1993, and

(ii) in the case of tuna or a product containing tuna harvested by a nation whose fishing vessels engage in high seas driftnet fishing, shall require that the government of the exporting nation provide documentary evidence that the tuna or tuna product was not harvested with a large-scale driftnet anywhere on the high seas after July 1, 1991.

For purposes of subparagraph (F), the term “driftnet” has the meaning given such term in section 4003 of the Driftnet Impact Monitoring, Assessment, and Control Act of 1987 (16 U.S.C. 1822 note), except that, until January 1, 1994, the term “driftnet” does not include the use in the northeast Atlantic Ocean of gillnets with a total length not to exceed five kilometers if the use is in accordance with regulations adopted by the European Community pursuant to the October 28, 1991, decision by the Council of Fisheries Ministers of the Community.

(3) (A) The Secretary, on the basis of the best scientific evidence available and in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission, is authorized and directed, from time to time, having due regard to the distribution, abundance, breeding habits, and times and lines of migratory movements of such marine mammals, to determine when, to what extent, if at all, and by what means, it is compatible with this Act to waive the requirements of this section so as to allow taking, or importing of any marine mammal, or any marine mammal product, and to adopt suitable regulations, issue permits, and make determinations in accordance with sections 102, 103, 104, and 111 of this title permitting and governing such taking and importing, in accordance with such determinations: Provided, however, That the Secretary, in making such determinations, must be assured that the taking of such marine mammal is in accord with sound principles of resource protection and conservation as provided in the purposes and policies of this Act: Provided further, however, That no marine mammal or no marine mammal product may be imported into the United States unless the Secretary certifies that the program for taking marine mammals in the country of origin is consistent with the provisions and policies of this Act. Products of nations not so certified may not be imported into the United States for any purpose, including processing for exportation.

(B) Except for scientific research purposes, photography for educational or commercial purposes, or enhancing the survival or recovery of a species or stock as provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection, or as provided for under paragraph (5) of this subsection, during the moratorium no permit may be issued for the taking of any marine mammal which has been designated by the Secretary as depleted, and no importation may be made of any such mammal.

(4) (A) Except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C), the provisions of this Act shall not apply to the use of measures—

(i) by the owner of fishing gear or catch, or an employee or agent of such owner, to deter a marine mammal from damaging the gear or catch;

(ii) by the owner of other private property, or an agent, bailee, or employee of such owner, to deter a marine mammal from damaging private property;

(iii) by any person, to deter a marine mammal from endangering personal safety; or

(iv) by a government employee, to deter a marine mammal from damaging public property,

so long as such measures do not result in the death or serious injury of a marine mammal.

(B) The Secretary shall, through consultation with appropriate experts, and after notice and opportunity for public comment, publish in the Federal Register a list of guidelines for use in safely deterring marine mammals. In the case of marine mammals listed as endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Secretary shall recommend specific measures which may be used to nonlethally deter marine mammals. Actions to deter marine mammals consistent with such guidelines or specific measures shall not be a violation of this Act.

(C) If the Secretary determines, using the best scientific information available, that certain forms of deterrence have a significant adverse effect on marine mammals, the Secretary may prohibit such deterrent methods, after notice and opportunity for public comment, through regulation under this Act.

(D) The authority to deter marine mammals pursuant to subparagraph (A) applies to all marine mammals, including all stocks designated as depleted under this Act.

(5) (A) (i) ~~Except as provided by clause (ii), upon~~ Upon request therefor by ~~citizens of the United States who engage~~ a citizen of the United States who engages in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) ~~within a specified geographical region,~~ the Secretary shall allow, ~~during periods of not more than five consecutive years each,~~ the incidental, but not intentional, taking by ~~citizens~~ the citizen while engaging in that activity ~~within that region of small numbers~~ of marine mammals of a species or population stock if the Secretary, after notice (in the Federal Register and in newspapers of general circulation, and through appropriate electronic media, in the coastal areas that may be affected by such activity) and opportunity for public comment—

(I) finds that the total of such taking ~~during each five-year (or less) period concerned~~ resulting from the specified activity will have a negligible impact on such species or stock and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stock for taking for subsistence uses pursuant to subsection (b) or section 109(f) or, in the case of a cooperative agreement under both this Act and the Whaling Convention Act of 1949, pursuant to section 112(c); and

(II) prescribes regulations setting forth—

(aa) permissible methods of taking pursuant to such activity; ~~and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on such species or stock and its habitat~~ and, as appropriate, practicable and economically feasible conditions to be implemented by the citizen engaged in the activity to minimize the impact of such taking on such species or stock and the habitat of such species or stock, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance, and on the availability of such species or stock for subsistence uses; ~~and~~

(bb) requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking.

(cc) that any condition or requirement imposed pursuant to items (aa) and (bb) shall not result in more than a minor change to the specified activity and shall not alter the basic design, location, scope, duration, or timing of the specified activity.

(ii)² In the case of a military readiness activity (as defined in section 315(f) of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107–314; 16 U.S.C. 703 note), clause (i) shall be applied—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (I), by substituting “seven consecutive years” for “five consecutive years”; and

(II) in clause (I), by substituting “seven-year” for “five-year”.

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Margin for clause (ii) (as added by section 316(3) of division A of Public Law 115–232) is so in law.

(iii) For a military readiness activity (as defined in section 315(f) of Public Law 107–314; 16 U.S.C. 703 note), a determination of “least practicable adverse impact on such species or stock” under clause (i)(II)(aa) shall include consideration of personnel safety, practicality of implementation, and impact on the effectiveness of the military readiness activity. Before making the required determination, the Secretary shall consult with the Department of Defense regarding personnel safety, practicality of implementation, and impact on the effectiveness of the military readiness activity.

(iv) Notwithstanding clause (i), for any authorization affecting a military readiness activity (as defined in section 315(f) of Public Law 107–314; 16 U.S.C. 703 note), the Secretary shall publish the notice required by such clause only in the Federal Register.

(v) A request submitted under clause (i) shall be deemed approved and the applicant may proceed with the specified activity if the Secretary fails—

(I) to make the findings described in clause (i)(I) and prescribe regulations as described in clause (i)(II) not later than 165 days after receipt of—

(aa) a such request;

(bb) additional information to support such a request under clause (ii)(II)

(cc); or

(cc) a request to proceed on the basis of the information already provided under clause (ii)(II)(bb); or

(II) to issue to the applicant a letter described in clause (iii)(III) within the time required by clause (iii).

(vi) (I) The Secretary shall not prepare an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) with respect to—

(aa) making findings under clause (i)(I);

(bb) the prescription of regulations under clause (i)(II); or

(cc) the issuance of a letter under clause (iii)(III).

(II) The following activities shall not be subject to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)):

(aa) Making findings under clause (i)(I).

(bb) The prescription of regulations under clause (i)(II).

(cc) The issuance of a letter under clause (iii)(III) and any Federal agency action associated with the activity for which such letter is issued.

(III) Subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 9(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1538(a)(1)) shall not apply with respect to the take of a marine mammal that is in compliance with a letter issued under clause (iii)(III).

(B) The Secretary shall withdraw, or suspend for a time certain (either on an individual or class basis, as appropriate) the permission to take marine mammals under subparagraph (A) pursuant to a specified activity ~~within a specified geographical region~~ if the Secretary finds, after notice and opportunity for public comment (as required under subparagraph (A) unless subparagraph (C)(i) applies), that—

(i) the regulations prescribed under subparagraph (A) regarding methods of taking, monitoring, or reporting are not being substantially complied with by a person engaging in such activity; or

(ii) the taking allowed under subparagraph (A) pursuant to one or more activities ~~within one or more regions~~ is having, or may have, more than a negligible impact on the species or stock concerned.

(C) (i) The requirement for notice and opportunity for public comment in subparagraph (B) shall not apply in the case of a suspension of permission to take if the Secretary determines that an emergency exists which poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stock concerned.

(ii) Sections 103 and 104 shall not apply to the taking of marine mammals under the authority of this paragraph.

(D) (i) Upon request therefor by ~~citizens of the United States who engage a~~ *citizen who engages* in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) ~~within a specific geographic region~~, the Secretary shall authorize, for periods of not more than 1 year, subject to such conditions as the Secretary may specify, the incidental, but not intentional, taking by harassment ~~of small numbers~~ of marine mammals of a species or population stock by such ~~citizens~~ *citizen* while engaging in that activity ~~within that region~~ if the Secretary finds that such harassment during each period concerned—

(I) will have a negligible impact on such species or stock, and

(II) will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stock for taking for subsistence uses pursuant to subsection (b), or section 109(f) or pursuant to a cooperative agreement under section 119.

(ii) The authorization for such activity shall prescribe, where applicable—

(I) permissible methods of taking by harassment pursuant to such activity, ~~and other means of effecting the least practicable impact on such species or stock and its habitat~~ *and, as appropriate, practicable and economically feasible conditions to be implemented by the citizen engaged in the activity to minimize the impact of such harassment on such species or stock and the habitat of such species or stock*, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance, and on the availability of such species or stock for taking for subsistence uses pursuant to subsection (b) or section 109(f) or pursuant to a cooperative agreement under section 119; ~~and~~

(II) the measures that the Secretary determines are necessary to ensure no unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species

or stock for taking for subsistence uses pursuant to subsection (b) or section 109(f) or pursuant to a cooperative agreement under section 119; ~~and~~.

~~(III) requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking by harassment, including~~ efficient and practicable requirements pertaining to the monitoring of such taking by harassment while the activity is being conducted and the reporting of such taking, including, as the Secretary determines necessary, requirements for the independent peer review of proposed monitoring plans or other research proposals where the proposed activity may affect the availability of a species or stock for taking for subsistence uses pursuant to subsection (b) or section 109(f) or pursuant to a cooperative agreement under section 119; ~~and~~

(IV) that any condition, measure, or requirement imposed pursuant to subparagraph (I), (II), or (III) shall not result in more than a minor change to the specified activity and shall not alter the basic design, location, scope, duration, or timing of the specified activity.

~~(iii) The Secretary shall publish a proposed authorization not later than 45 days after receiving an application under this subparagraph and request public comment through notice in the Federal Register, newspapers of general circulation, and appropriate electronic media and to all locally affected communities for a period of 30 days after publication. Not later than 45 days after the close of the public comment period, if the Secretary makes the findings set forth in clause (i), the Secretary shall issue an authorization with appropriate conditions to meet the requirements of clause (ii).~~

(iii) (I) Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a request under clause (i), the Secretary shall—

(aa) determine whether additional information is necessary to either—

(AA) make a finding under subclause (I) or (II) of clause (i); or

(BB) develop conditions to minimize impacts from or monitor such taking under clause (ii); and

(bb) if the Secretary makes an affirmative determination under item (aa), notify the citizen that submitted the request (in this subparagraph referred to as the 'applicant').

(II) (aa) In determining whether additional information is necessary under subclause (I)(aa), the Secretary shall take into account information already held by or available to the Secretary, which the applicant shall not be required to resubmit.

(bb) If the Secretary determines additional information is necessary under subclause (I)(aa) and the applicant disagrees with such determination, the applicant may request the Secretary proceed on the basis of the information provided by the applicant.

(cc) If the Secretary notifies an applicant under subclause (I)(bb) that additional information is necessary under subclause (I)(aa) and the applicant submits to the Secretary additional information pursuant to such notification, the Secretary shall treat the submission as a new request received under clause (i) subject to the provisions of this clause.

(iv) (I) Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a request under clause (i) that the Secretary determines under clause (iii)(I)(aa) does not require additional information, a request under clause (iii)(II)(bb) to proceed on the basis of information already provided, or additional information submitted under clause (iii)(II)(cc), the Secretary shall publish a proposed authorization and provide to all locally affected communities through the Federal Register, newspapers of general circulation, and appropriate electronic media notice of a 30-day public comment period with respect to such proposed authorization beginning on the date on which the proposed authorization is published.

(II) Not later than 45 days after the date on which the public comment period described in subclause (I) for a proposed authorization ends, if the Secretary makes the findings set forth in clause (i), the Secretary shall issue to the applicant an authorization pursuant to clause (ii).

(v) A request submitted under clause (i) shall be deemed approved if the Secretary fails to make a final decision on the request not later than 135 days after the date on which the Secretary receives the request.

~~(iv)~~ ~~(vi)~~ The Secretary shall modify, suspend, or revoke an authorization if the Secretary finds that the provisions of clauses³ (i) or (ii) are not being met.

3

So in law. Probably should be “~~clause~~”. See section 4(a)(5) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 1994 (P.L. 103–238; 108 Stat. 534).

~~(v)~~ ~~(vii)~~ A person conducting an activity for which an authorization has been granted under this subparagraph shall not be subject to the penalties of this Act for taking by harassment that occurs in compliance with such authorization.

(viii) (I) The holder of an authorization issued under this subparagraph may submit to the Secretary a request for a 1-year extension of such authorization not later than 30 days after the date on which the authorization expires.

(II) The Secretary shall grant a request received under subclause (I) on the same terms and without further review if the Secretary determines there is no substantial change to the specified activity that is the subject of the request.

~~(vi)~~ ~~(ix)~~ For a military readiness activity (as defined in section 315(f) of Public Law 107–314; 16 U.S.C. 703 note), ~~a determination of conditions developed under clause (ii)(I) “least practicable adverse impact on such species or stock” under clause (i)(I)~~ shall include consideration of personnel safety, practicality of implementation, and impact on the effectiveness of the military readiness activity. Before ~~making the required determination~~ *developing such conditions*, the Secretary shall consult with the Department of Defense regarding personnel safety, practicality of implementation, and impact on the effectiveness of the military readiness activity.

~~(vii)~~ ~~(x)~~ Notwithstanding clause (iii), for any authorization affecting a military readiness activity (as defined in section 315(f) of Public Law 107–314; 16 U.S.C. 703 note), the Secretary shall publish the notice required by such clause only in the Federal Register.

(xi) (I) The issuance of an authorization under clause (i) shall not be considered a major Federal action under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

(II) An authorization issued under clause (i) and any Federal agency action associated with the activity for which such authorization is issued shall not be subject to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)).

(III) Subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 9(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1538(a)(1)) shall not apply with respect to the take of a marine mammal that is in compliance with a an authorization issued under clause (i).

(E) (i) During any period of up to 3 consecutive years, the Secretary shall allow the incidental, but not the intentional, taking by persons using vessels of the United States or vessels which have valid fishing permits issued by the Secretary in accordance with section 204(b) of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1824(b)), while engaging in commercial fishing operations, of marine mammals from a species or stock designated as depleted because of its listing as an endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) if the Secretary, after notice and opportunity for public comment, determines that—

(I) the incidental mortality and serious injury from commercial fisheries will have a negligible impact on such species or stock;

(II) a recovery plan has been developed or is being developed for such species or stock pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973; and

(III) where required under section 118, a monitoring program is established under subsection (d) of such section, vessels engaged in such fisheries are registered in accordance with such section, and a take reduction plan has been developed or is being developed for such species or stock.

(ii) Upon a determination by the Secretary that the requirements of clause (i) have been met, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a list of those fisheries for which such determination was made, and, for vessels required to register under section 118, shall issue an appropriate permit for each authorization granted under such section to vessels to which this paragraph applies. Vessels engaged in a fishery included in the notice published by the Secretary under this clause which are not required to register under section 118 shall not be subject to the penalties of this Act for the incidental taking of marine mammals to which this paragraph applies, so long as the owner or master of such vessel reports any incidental mortality or injury of such marine mammals to the Secretary in accordance with section 118.

(iii) If, during the course of the commercial fishing season, the Secretary determines that the level of incidental mortality or serious injury from commercial fisheries for which a determination was made under clause (i) has resulted or is likely to result in an impact that is more than negligible on the endangered or threatened species or stock, the Secretary shall use the emergency authority granted

under section 118 to protect such species or stock, and may modify any permit granted under this paragraph as necessary.

(iv) The Secretary may suspend for a time certain or revoke a permit granted under this subparagraph only if the Secretary determines that the conditions or limitations set forth in such permit are not being complied with. The Secretary may amend or modify, after notice and opportunity for public comment, the list of fisheries published under clause (ii) whenever the Secretary determines there has been a significant change in the information or conditions used to determine such list.

(v) Sections 103 and 104 shall not apply to the taking of marine mammals under the authority of this subparagraph.

(vi) This subparagraph shall not govern the incidental taking of California sea otters and shall not be deemed to amend or repeal the Act of November 7, 1986 (Public Law 99–625; 100 Stat. 3500).

(vii) For purposes of clause (i)(I), a commercial fishery shall be deemed to have a negligible impact on a stock if—

(I) with respect to the commercial fishery, the observed average annual rate of incidental serious injury and mortality for the stock is less than or equal to the potential biological removal level for the stock; or

(II) the potential biological removal level for the stock is designated as unknown.

~~(F) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, any authorization affecting a military readiness activity (as defined in section 315(f) of Public Law 107–314; 16 U.S.C. 703 note) shall not be subject to the following requirements:~~

~~(i) In subparagraph (A), “within a specified geographical region” and “within that region of small numbers”.~~

~~(ii) In subparagraph (B), “within a specified geographical region” and “within one or more regions”.~~

~~(iii) In subparagraph (D), “within a specific geographic region”, “of small numbers”, and “within that region”.~~

(6) (A) A marine mammal product may be imported into the United States if the product—

(i) was legally possessed and exported by any citizen of the United States in conjunction with travel outside the United States, provided that the product is imported into the United States by the same person upon the termination of travel;

(ii) was acquired outside of the United States as part of a cultural exchange by an Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo residing in Alaska; or

(iii) is owned by a Native inhabitant of Russia, Canada, or Greenland and is imported for noncommercial purposes in conjunction with travel within the United States or as part of a cultural exchange with an Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo residing in Alaska.

(B) For the purposes of this paragraph, the term—

(i) “Native inhabitant of Russia, Canada, or Greenland” means a person residing in Russia, Canada, or Greenland who is related by blood, is a member

of the same clan or ethnological grouping, or shares a common heritage with an Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo residing in Alaska; and

(ii) “cultural exchange” means the sharing or exchange of ideas, information, gifts, clothing, or handicrafts between an Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo residing in Alaska and a Native inhabitant of Russia, Canada, or Greenland, including rendering of raw marine mammal parts as part of such exchange into clothing or handicrafts through carving, painting, sewing, or decorating.

(b) Except as provided in section 109, the provisions of this Act shall not apply with respect to the taking of any marine mammal by any Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo who resides in Alaska and who dwells on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean if such taking—

(1) is for subsistence purposes; or

(2) is done for purposes of creating and selling authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing: Provided, That only authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing may be sold in interstate commerce: And provided further, That any edible portion of marine mammals may be sold in native villages and towns in Alaska or for native consumption. For the purposes of this subsection, the term “authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing” means items composed wholly or in some significant respect of natural materials, and which are produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional native handicrafts without the use of pantographs, multiple carvers, or other mass copying devices. Traditional native handicrafts include, but are not limited to weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting; and

(3) in each case, is not accomplished in a wasteful manner.

Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this subsection, when, under this Act, the Secretary determines any species or stock of marine mammal subject to taking by Indians, Aleuts, or Eskimos to be depleted, he may prescribe regulations upon the taking of such marine mammals by any Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo described in this subsection. Such regulations may be established with reference to species or stocks, geographical description of the area included, the season for taking, or any other factors related to the reason for establishing such regulations and consistent with the purposes of this Act. Such regulations shall be prescribed after notice and hearing required by section 103 of this title and shall be removed as soon as the Secretary determines that the need for their imposition has disappeared. In promulgating any regulation or making any assessment pursuant to a hearing or proceeding under this subsection or section 117(b)(2), or in making any determination of depletion under this subsection or finding regarding unmitigable adverse impacts under subsection (a)(5) that affects stocks or persons to which this subsection applies, the Secretary shall be responsible for demonstrating that such regulation, assessment, determination, or finding is supported by substantial evidence on the basis of the record as a whole. The preceding sentence shall only be applicable in an action brought by one or more Alaska Native organizations representing persons to which this subsection applies.

(c) It shall not be a violation of this Act to take a marine mammal if such taking is imminently necessary in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger, and such taking is reported to the Secretary within 48 hours. The Secretary may seize and dispose of any carcass.

(d) **Good Samaritan Exemption.**— It shall not be a violation of this Act to take a marine mammal if—

(1) such taking is imminently necessary to avoid serious injury, additional injury, or death to a marine mammal entangled in fishing gear or debris;

(2) reasonable care is taken to ensure the safe release of the marine mammal, taking into consideration the equipment, expertise, and conditions at hand;

(3) reasonable care is exercised to prevent any further injury to the marine mammal; and

(4) such taking is reported to the Secretary within 48 hours.

(e) Act Not to Apply to Incidental Takings by United States Citizens Employed on Foreign Vessels Outside the United States EEZ.— The provisions of this Act shall not apply to a citizen of the United States who incidentally takes any marine mammal during fishing operations outside the United States exclusive economic zone (as defined in section 3 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802)) when employed on a foreign fishing vessel of a harvesting nation which is in compliance with the International Dolphin Conservation Program.

(f) Exemption of Actions Necessary for National Defense.— (1) The Secretary of Defense, after conferring with the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of the Interior, or both, as appropriate, may exempt any action or category of actions undertaken by the Department of Defense or its components from compliance with any requirement of this Act, if the Secretary determines that it is necessary for national defense.

(2) An exemption granted under this subsection—

(A) subject to subparagraph (B), shall be effective for a period specified by the Secretary of Defense; and

(B) shall not be effective for more than 2 years.

(3) (A) The Secretary of Defense may issue additional exemptions under this subsection for the same action or category of actions, after—

(i) conferring with the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of the Interior, or both as appropriate; and

(ii) making a new determination that the additional exemption is necessary for national defense.

(B) Each additional exemption under this paragraph shall be effective for a period specified by the Secretary of Defense, of not more than 2 years.

(4) Not later than 30 days after issuing an exemption under paragraph (1) or an additional exemption under paragraph (3), the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate notice describing the exemption and the reasons therefor. The notice may be provided in classified form if the Secretary of Defense determines that use of the classified form is necessary for reasons of national security.

* * * * *

Sec. 103. REGULATIONS ON TAKING OF MARINE MAMMALS

(a)(1) The Secretary, on the basis of the best scientific evidence available and in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission, shall prescribe such regulations with respect to the taking and importing of animals from each species of marine mammal (including regulations on the taking and importing of individuals within population stocks) as he deems necessary and appropriate to insure that such taking will not be to the disadvantage of those species and population stocks and will be consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of this Act.

(2) In deeming a regulation necessary and appropriate under this subsection, the Secretary shall—

(A) consider—

(i) the likelihood and severity of harm to marine mammals in the absence of the regulation;

(ii) the effectiveness of the regulation in mitigating the identified harm;

(iii) the potential economic, navigational, safety, and operational impacts of the regulation on affected industries; and

(iv) the availability and feasibility of alternative measures to the regulation that achieve the same conservation objectives with fewer negative consequences; and

(B) ensure that the regulation—

(i) is based on the best available science and data regarding marine mammal populations and threats;

(ii) does not impose undue burdens on industry or stakeholders without demonstrable conservation benefits;

(iii) is the least restrictive means available to achieve the intended conservation objective; and

(iv) incorporates stakeholder engagement and consultation to evaluate the practical implications of the regulation.

(3) In this subsection, the term “*necessary and appropriate*” means—

(A) reasonable and proportionate;

(B) supported by the best available scientific evidence; and

(C) essential to prevent a significant adverse impact on a marine mammal species or stock.

(b) In prescribing such regulations, the Secretary shall give full consideration to all factors which may affect the extent to which such animals may be taken or imported, including but not limited to the effect of such regulations on—

- (1) existing and future levels of marine mammal species and population stocks;
- (2) existing international treaty and agreement obligations of the United States;
- (3) the marine ecosystem and related environmental considerations;
- (4) the conservation, development, and utilization of fishery resources; and
- (5) the economic and technological feasibility of implementation.

(c) The regulations prescribed under subsection (a) of this section for any species or population stock of marine mammal may include, but are not limited to, restrictions with respect to—

- (1) the number of animals which may be taken or imported in any calendar year pursuant to permits issued under section 104 of this title;
- (2) the age, size, or sex (or any combination of the foregoing) of animals which may be taken or imported, whether or not a quota prescribed under paragraph (1) of this subsection applies with respect to such animals;
- (3) the season or other period of time within which animals may be taken or imported;
- (4) the manner and locations in which animals may be taken or imported; and
- (5) fishing techniques which have been found to cause undue fatalities to any species of marine mammal in a fishery.

(d) Regulations prescribed to carry out this section with respect to any species or stock of marine mammals must be made on the record after opportunity for an agency hearing on both the Secretary's determination to waive the moratorium pursuant to section 101(a)(3)(A) of this title and on such regulations, except that, in addition to any other requirements imposed by law with respect to agency rulemaking, the Secretary shall publish and make available to the public either before or concurrent with the publication of notice in the Federal Register of his intention to prescribe regulations under this section—

(1) a statement of the estimated existing levels of the species and population stocks of the marine mammal concerned;

(2) a statement of the expected impact of the proposed regulations on the optimum sustainable population of such species or population stock;

(3) a statement describing the evidence before the Secretary upon which he proposes to base such regulations; and

(4) any studies made by or for the Secretary or any recommendations made by or for the Secretary or the Marine Mammal Commission which relate to the establishment of such regulations.

(e) Any regulation prescribed pursuant to this section shall be periodically reviewed, and may be modified from time to time in such manner as the Secretary deems consistent with and necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(f) Within six months after the effective date of this Act and every twelve months thereafter, the Secretary shall report to the public through publication in the Federal Register and to the Congress on the current status of all marine mammal species and population stocks subject to the provisions of this Act. His report shall describe those actions taken and those measures believed necessary, including where appropriate, the issuance of permits pursuant to this title to assure the well-being of such marine mammals.

Sec. 108. INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM (a) The Secretary, through the Secretary of State, shall—

(1) initiate negotiations as soon as possible for the development of bilateral or multinational agreements with other nations for the protection and conservation of all marine mammals covered by this Act;

(2) initiate—

(A) negotiations as soon as possible with all foreign governments which are engaged in, or which have persons or companies engaged in, commercial fishing operations which are found by the Secretary to be unduly harmful to any species or population stock of marine mammal, for the purpose of entering into bilateral and multilateral treaties with such countries to protect marine mammals, with the Secretary of State to prepare a draft agenda relating to this matter for discussion at appropriate international meetings and forums;

(B) discussions with foreign governments whose vessels harvest yellowfin tuna with purse seines in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, for the purpose of concluding, through the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission or such other bilateral or multilateral institutions as may be appropriate, international arrangements for the conservation of marine mammals taken incidentally in the course of harvesting such tuna, which should include provisions for (i) cooperative research into alternative methods of locating and catching yellowfin tuna which do not involve the taking of marine mammals, (ii) cooperative research on the status of affected marine mammal population stocks, (iii)

reliable monitoring of the number, rate, and species of marine mammals taken by vessels of harvesting nations, (iv) limitations on incidental take levels based upon the best scientific information available, and (v) the use of the best marine mammal safety techniques and equipment that are economically and technologically practicable to reduce the incidental kill and serious injury of marine mammals to ~~insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate~~ levels that have no more than a negligible impact on the species or stock;

(C) negotiations to revise the Convention for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (1 U.S.T. 230; TIAS 2044) which will incorporate—

(i) the conservation and management provisions agreed to by the nations which have signed the Declaration of Panama and in the Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks Agreement, as opened for signature on December 4, 1995; and

(ii) a revised schedule of annual contributions to the expenses of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission that is equitable to participating nations; and

(D) discussions with those countries participating, or likely to participate, in the International Dolphin Conservation Program, for the purpose of identifying sources of funds needed for research and other measures promoting effective protection of dolphins, other marine species, and the marine ecosystem;

(3) encourage such other agreements to promote the purposes of this Act with other nations for the protection of specific ocean and land regions which are of special significance to the health and stability of marine mammals;

(4) initiate the amendment of any existing international treaty for the protection and conservation of any species of marine mammal to which the United States is a party in order to make such treaty consistent with the purposes and policies of this Act;

(5) seek the convening of any international ministerial meeting on marine mammals before July 1, 1973, for the purposes of (A) the negotiation of a binding international convention for the protection and conservation of all marine mammals, and (B) the implementation of paragraph (3) of this section; and

(6) provide to the Congress by not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act a full report on the results of his efforts under this section.

(b) (1) In addition to the foregoing, the Secretary shall—

(A) in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission established by section 201 of this Act, undertake a study of the North Pacific fur seals to determine whether herds of such seals subject to the jurisdiction of the United States are presently at their optimum sustainable population and what population trends are evident; and

(B) in consultation with the Secretary of State, promptly undertake a comprehensive study of the provisions of this Act, as they relate to North Pacific fur seals, and the provisions of the North Pacific Fur Seal Convention signed on February 9, 1957, as extended (hereafter referred to in this subsection as the “Convention”), to determine what modifications, if any, should be made to the provisions of the Convention, or of this Act, or both, to make the Convention and this Act consistent with each other.

The Secretary shall complete the studies required under this paragraph not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act and shall immediately provide copies thereof to Congress.

(2) If the Secretary finds—

(A) as a result of the study required under paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, that the North Pacific fur seal herds are below their optimum sustainable population and are not

trending upward toward such level, or have reached their optimum sustainable population but are commencing a downward trend, and believes the herds to be in danger of depletion; or

(B) as a result of the study required under paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection, that modifications of the Convention are desirable to make it and this Act consistent;

he shall, through the Secretary of State, immediately initiate negotiations to modify the Convention so as to (i) reduce or halt the taking of seals to the extent required to assure that such herds attain and remain at their optimum sustainable population, or (ii) make the Convention and this Act consistent; or both, as the case may be. If negotiations to so modify the Convention are unsuccessful, the Secretary shall, through the Secretary of State, take such steps as may be necessary to continue the existing Convention beyond its present termination date so as to continue to protect and conserve the North Pacific fur seals and to prevent a return to pelagic sealing.

(c) The Secretary shall include a description of the annual results of discussions initiated and conducted pursuant to subsection (a)(2)(B), as well as any proposals for further action to achieve the purposes of that subsection, in the report required under section 103(f) of this title.

Sec. 112. REGULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION ^{(a)(1)} The Secretary,

in consultation with any other Federal agency to the extent that such agency may be affected, shall prescribe such regulations as are necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of this title.

(2) In prescribing a regulation under this subsection, the Secretary shall—

(A) consider—

(i) the likelihood and severity of harm to marine mammals in the absence of the regulation;

(ii) the effectiveness of the regulation in mitigating the identified harm;

(iii) the potential economic, navigational, safety, and operational impacts of the regulation on affected industries; and

(iv) the availability and feasibility of alternative measures to the regulation that achieve the same conservation objectives with fewer negative consequences; and

(B) ensure that the regulation—

(i) is based on the best available science and data regarding marine mammal populations and threats;

(ii) does not impose undue burdens on industry or stakeholders without demonstrable conservation benefits;

(iii) is the least restrictive means available to achieve the intended conservation objective; and

(iv) incorporates stakeholder engagement and consultation to evaluate the practical implications of the regulation.

(3) In this subsection, the term ““necessary and appropriate”” means—

(A) reasonable and proportionate;

(B) supported by the best available scientific evidence; and

(C) essential to prevent a significant adverse impact on a marine mammal species or stock.

(b) Each Federal agency is authorized and directed to cooperate with the Secretary, in such manner as may be mutually agreeable, in carrying out the purposes of this title.

(c) The Secretary may enter into such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this title or title IV and on such terms as he deems appropriate with any Federal or State agency, public or private institution, or other person.

(d) The Secretary shall review annually the operation of each program in which the United States participates involving the taking of marine mammals on land. If at any time the Secretary finds that any such program cannot be administered on lands owned by the United States or in which the United States has an interest in a manner consistent with the purposes of policies of this Act, he shall suspend the operation of that program and shall include in the annual report to the public and the Congress required under section 103(f) of this Act his reasons for such suspension, together with recommendations for such legislation as he deems necessary and appropriate to resolve the problem.

(e) If the Secretary determines, based on a stock assessment under section 117 or other significant new information obtained under this Act, that impacts on rookeries, mating grounds, or other areas of similar ecological significance to marine mammals may be causing the decline or impeding the recovery of a strategic stock, the Secretary may develop and implement conservation or management measures to alleviate those impacts. Such measures shall be developed and implemented after consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and the appropriate Federal agencies and after notice and opportunity for public comment.

Sec. 115. STATUS REVIEW; CONSERVATION PLANS (a) (1) In

any action by the Secretary to determine if a species or stock should be designated as depleted, or should no longer be designated as depleted, regardless of whether such action is taken on the initiative of the Secretary or in response to a petition for a status review, the Secretary shall only make such a determination by issuance of a rule, after notice and opportunity for public comment and after a call for information in accordance with paragraph (2).

(2) The Secretary shall make any determination described in paragraph (1) solely on the basis of the best scientific information available. Prior to the issuance of a proposed rule concerning any such determination, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a call to assist the Secretary in obtaining scientific information from individuals and organizations concerned with the conservation of marine mammals, from persons in industry which might be affected by the determination, and from academic institutions. In addition, the Secretary shall utilize, to the extent the Secretary determines to be feasible, informal working groups of interested parties and other methods to gather the necessary information.

(3) (A) If the Secretary receives a petition for a status review as described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall publish a notice in the Federal Register that such a petition has been received and is available for public review.

(B) Within sixty days after receipt of the petition, the Secretary shall publish a finding in the Federal Register as to whether the petition presents substantial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted.

(C) If the Secretary makes a positive finding under subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall include in the Federal Register notice, a finding that—

(i) a review of the status of the species or stock will be commenced promptly; or

(ii) a prompt review of the petition is precluded by other pending status determination petitions and that expeditious progress is being made to process pending status determination petitions under this title.

In no case after making a finding under this subparagraph shall the Secretary delay commencing a review of the status of a species or stock for more than one hundred and twenty days after receipt of the petition.

(D) No later than two hundred and ten days after the receipt of the petition, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a proposed rule as to the status of the species or stock, along with the reasons underlying the proposed status determination. Persons shall have at least sixty days to submit comments on such a proposed rule.

(E) Not later than ninety days after the close of the comment period on a proposed rule issued under subparagraph (D), the Secretary shall issue a final rule on the status of the species or stock involved, along with the reasons for the status determination. If the Secretary finds with respect to such a proposed rule that there is substantial disagreement regarding the sufficiency or accuracy of the available information relevant to a status determination, the Secretary may delay the issuance of a final rule for a period of not more than six months for purposes of soliciting additional information.

(F) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (D) and (E) of this paragraph and section 553 of Title 5, United States Code, the Secretary may issue a final rule as to the status of a species or stock any time sixty or more days after a positive finding under subparagraph (B) if the Secretary determines there is substantial information available to warrant such final status determination and further delay would pose a significant risk to the well-being of any species or stock. Along with the final rule, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register detailed reasons for the expedited determination.

(b) (1) The Secretary shall prepare conservation plans—

(A) by December 31, 1989, for North Pacific fur seals;

(B) by December 31, 1990, for Steller sea lions; and

(C) as soon as possible, for any species or stock designated as depleted under this title, except that a conservation plan need not be prepared if the Secretary determines that it will not promote the conservation of the species or stock.

(2) Each plan shall have the purpose of conserving and restoring the species or stock to its optimum sustainable population. The Secretary shall model such plans on recovery plans required under section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533(f)).

(3) The Secretary shall act expeditiously to implement each conservation plan prepared under paragraph (1). Each year, the Secretary shall specify in the annual report prepared under section 103(f) of this title what measures have been taken to prepare and implement such plans.

(4) If the Secretary determines that a take reduction plan is necessary to reduce the incidental taking of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations from a strategic stock, or for species or stocks which interact with a commercial fishery for which the Secretary has made a determination under ~~section 118(f)(1)~~ section 118(e)(1), any conservation plan prepared under this subsection for such species or stock shall incorporate the take reduction plan required under section 118 for such species or stock.

Sec. 117. STOCK ASSESSMENTS.

(a) **In General.**— Not later than August 1, 1994, the Secretary shall, in consultation with the appropriate regional scientific review group established under subsection (d), prepare a draft stock assessment for each marine mammal stock which occurs in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States. Each draft stock assessment, based on the best scientific information available, shall—

(1) describe the entire geographic range of the affected stock, including any seasonal or temporal variation in such range;

(2) if known, provide for such stock the minimum population estimate, current and maximum net productivity rates, and current population trend, including a description of the information upon which these are based;

(3) estimate the annual human-caused mortality and serious injury of the stock by source and, for a strategic stock, other factors that may be causing a decline or impeding recovery of the stock, including effects on marine mammal habitat and prey;

(4) describe commercial fisheries that interact with the stock, including—

(A) the approximate number of vessels actively participating in each such fishery;

(B) the estimated level of incidental mortality and serious injury of the stock by each such fishery on an annual basis;

(C) seasonal or area differences in such incidental mortality or serious injury; and

(D) the rate, based on the appropriate standard unit of fishing effort, of such incidental mortality and serious injury, and an analysis stating whether such level is insignificant **and is approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate**;

(5) categorize the status of the stock as one that either—

(A) has a level of human-caused mortality and serious injury that is not likely to cause the stock to be reduced below its optimum sustainable population; or

(B) is a strategic stock, with a description of the reasons therefor; and

(6) **if known**, estimate the potential biological removal level for the stock, describing the information used to calculate it, **including the recovery factor**.

(b) Public Comment.— (1) The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a notice of the availability of a draft stock assessment or any revision thereof and provide an opportunity for public review and comment during a period of 90 days. Such notice shall include a summary of the assessment and a list of the sources of information or published reports upon which the assessment is based.

(2) Subsequent to the notice of availability required under paragraph (1), if requested by a person to which section 101(b) applies, the Secretary shall conduct a proceeding on the record prior to publishing a final stock assessment or any revision thereof for any stock subject to taking under section 101(b).

(3) After consideration of the best scientific information available, the advice of the appropriate regional scientific review group established under subsection (d), and the comments of the general public, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a notice of availability and a summary of the final stock assessment or any revision thereof, not later than 90 days after—

(A) the close of the public comment period on a draft stock assessment or revision thereof;

or

(B) final action on an agency proceeding pursuant to paragraph (2).

(c) Review and Revision.— (1) The Secretary shall review stock assessments in accordance with this subsection—

(A) at least annually for stocks which are specified as strategic stocks;

(B) at least annually for stocks for which significant new information is available; and

(C) at least once every 3 years for all other stocks.

(2) If the review under paragraph (1) indicates that the status of the stock has changed or can be more accurately determined, the Secretary shall revise the stock assessment in accordance with subsection (b).

(d) Regional Scientific Review Groups.— (1) Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary of Commerce shall, in consultation with the Secretary of the

Interior (with respect to marine mammals under that Secretary's jurisdiction), the Marine Mammal Commission, the Governors of affected adjacent coastal States, regional fishery and wildlife management authorities, Alaska Native organizations and Indian tribes, and environmental and fishery groups, establish three independent regional scientific review groups representing Alaska, the Pacific Coast (including Hawaii), and the Atlantic Coast (including the Gulf of Mexico), consisting of individuals with expertise in marine mammal biology and ecology, population dynamics and modeling, commercial fishing technology and practices, and stocks taken under section 101(b). The Secretary of Commerce shall, to the maximum extent practicable, attempt to achieve a balanced representation of viewpoints among the individuals on each regional scientific review group. The regional scientific review groups shall advise the Secretary on—

- (A) population estimates and the population status and trends of such stocks;
 - (B) uncertainties and research needed regarding stock separation, abundance, or trends, and factors affecting the distribution, size, or productivity of the stock;
 - (C) uncertainties and research needed regarding the species, number, ages, gender, and reproductive status of marine mammals;
 - (D) research needed to identify modifications in fishing gear and practices likely to reduce the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in commercial fishing operations;
 - (E) the actual, expected, or potential impacts of habitat destruction, including marine pollution and natural environmental change, on specific marine mammal species or stocks, and for strategic stocks, appropriate conservation or management measures to alleviate any such impacts; and
 - (F) any other issue which the Secretary or the groups consider appropriate.
- (2) The scientific review groups established under this subsection shall not be subject to chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code.
- (3) Members of the scientific review groups shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed by the Secretary, upon request, for reasonable travel costs and expenses incurred in performing their obligations.
- (4) The Secretary may appoint or reappoint individuals to the regional scientific review groups under paragraph (1) as needed.
- (e) **Effect on Section 101(b).**— This section shall not affect or otherwise modify the provisions of section 101(b).

Sec. 118. TAKING OF MARINE MAMMALS INCIDENTAL TO COMMERCIAL FISHING OPERATIONS.

(a) **In General.**— (1) Effective on the date of enactment of this section, and except as provided in section 114 and in paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of this subsection, the provisions of this section shall govern the incidental taking of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations by persons using vessels of the United States or vessels which have valid fishing permits issued by the Secretary in accordance with section 204(b) of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1824(b)). ~~In any event it shall be the immediate goal that the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations be reduced to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within 7 years after the date of enactment of this section.~~

(2) In the case of the incidental taking of marine mammals from species or stocks designated under this Act as depleted on the basis of their listing as threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), both this section and section 101(a)(5)(E) of this Act shall apply.

(3) Sections 104(h) and title III, and not this section, shall govern the taking of marine mammals in the course of commercial purse seine fishing for yellowfin tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

(4) This section shall not govern the incidental taking of California sea otters and shall not be deemed to amend or repeal the Act of November 7, 1986 (Public Law 99–625; 100 Stat. 3500).

(5) Except as provided in section 101(c), the intentional lethal take of any marine mammal in the course of commercial fishing operations is prohibited.

(6) Sections 103 and 104 shall not apply to the incidental taking of marine mammals under the authority of this section.

~~(b) Zero Mortality Rate Goal.— (1) Commercial fisheries shall reduce incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within 7 years after the date of enactment of this section.~~

~~(2) Fisheries which maintain insignificant serious injury and mortality levels approaching a zero rate shall not be required to further reduce their mortality and serious injury rates.~~

~~(3) Three years after such date of enactment, the Secretary shall review the progress of all commercial fisheries, by fishery, toward reducing incidental mortality and serious injury to insignificant levels approaching a zero rate. The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries¹⁶ of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the results of such review within 1 year after commencement of the review. The Secretary shall note any commercial fishery for which additional information is required to accurately assess the level of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in the fishery.~~

¹⁶

~~The Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries of the House of Representatives was abolished by House Resolution No. 6, One Hundred Fourth Congress, Jan. 4, 1995. The former jurisdiction of such committee is divided among the Committee on Resources, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.~~

~~(4) If the Secretary determines after review under paragraph (3) that the rate of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in a commercial fishery is not consistent with paragraph (1), then the Secretary shall take appropriate action under subsection (f).~~

~~(e) (b) Registration and Authorization.— (1) The Secretary shall, within 90 days after the date of enactment of this section—~~

~~(A) publish in the Federal Register for public comment, for a period of not less than 90 days, any necessary changes to the Secretary's list of commercial fisheries published under section 114(b)(1) and which is in existence on March 31, 1994 (along with an explanation of such changes and a statement describing the marine mammal stocks interacting with, and the approximate number of vessels or persons actively involved in, each such fishery), with respect to commercial fisheries that have—~~

- (i) frequent incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals;
- (ii) occasional incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals; or
- (iii) a remote likelihood of or no known incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals;

(B) after the close of the period for such public comment, publish in the Federal Register a revised list of commercial fisheries and an update of information required by subparagraph (A), together with a summary of the provisions of this section and information sufficient to advise vessel owners on how to obtain an authorization and otherwise comply with the requirements of this section; and

(C) at least once each year thereafter, and at such other times as the Secretary considers appropriate, reexamine, based on information gathered under this Act and other relevant sources and after notice and opportunity for public comment, the classification of commercial fisheries and other determinations required under subparagraph (A) and publish in the Federal Register any necessary changes.

(2) (A) An authorization shall be granted by the Secretary in accordance with this section for a vessel engaged in a commercial fishery listed under paragraph (1)(A) (i) or (ii), upon receipt by the Secretary of a completed registration form providing the name of the vessel owner and operator, the name and description of the vessel, the fisheries in which it will be engaged, the approximate time, duration, and location of such fishery operations, and the general type and nature of use of the fishing gear and techniques used. Such information shall be in a readily usable format that can be efficiently entered into and utilized by an automated or computerized data processing system. A decal or other physical evidence that the authorization is current and valid shall be issued by the Secretary at the time an authorization is granted, and so long as the authorization remains current and valid, shall be reissued annually thereafter.

(B) No authorization may be granted under this section to the owner of a vessel unless such vessel—

- (i) is a vessel of the United States; or
- (ii) has a valid fishing permit issued by the Secretary in accordance with section 204(b) of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1824(b)).

(C) Except as provided in subsection (a), an authorization granted under this section shall allow the incidental taking of all species and stocks of marine mammals to which this Act applies.

(3) (A) An owner of a vessel engaged in any fishery listed under paragraph (1)(A) (i) or (ii) shall, in order to engage in the lawful incidental taking of marine mammals in a commercial fishery —

(i) have registered as required under paragraph (2) with the Secretary in order to obtain for each such vessel owned and used in the fishery an authorization for the purpose of incidentally taking marine mammals in accordance with this section, except that owners of vessels holding valid certificates of exemption under section 114 are deemed to have registered for purposes of this subsection for the period during which such exemption is valid;

(ii) ensure that a decal or such other physical evidence of a current and valid authorization as the Secretary may require is displayed on or is in the possession of the master of each such vessel;

(iii) report as required by ~~subsection (c)~~ subsection (d); and

(iv) comply with any applicable take reduction plan and emergency regulations issued under this section.

(B) Any owner of a vessel receiving an authorization under this section for any fishery listed under paragraph (1)(A) (i) or (ii) shall, as a condition of that authorization, take on board an observer if requested to do so by the Secretary.

(C) An owner of a vessel engaged in a fishery listed under paragraph (1)(A) (i) or (ii) who—

(i) fails to obtain from the Secretary an authorization for such vessel under this section;

(ii) fails to maintain a current and valid authorization for such vessel; or

(iii) fails to ensure that a decal or other physical evidence of such authorization issued by the Secretary is displayed on or is in possession of the master of the vessel,

and the master of any such vessel engaged in such fishery, shall be deemed to have violated this title, and for violations of clauses (i) and (ii) shall be subject to the penalties of this title, and for violations of clause (iii) shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$100 for each offense.

(D) If the owner of a vessel has obtained and maintains a current and valid authorization from the Secretary under this section and meets the requirements set forth in this section, including compliance with any regulations to implement a take reduction plan under this section, the owner of such vessel, and the master and crew members of the vessel, shall not be subject to the penalties set forth in this title for the incidental taking of marine mammals while such vessel is engaged in a fishery to which the authorization applies.

(E) Each owner of a vessel engaged in any fishery not listed under paragraph (1)(A) (i) or (ii), and the master and crew members of such a vessel, shall not be subject to the penalties set forth in this title for the incidental taking of marine mammals if such owner reports to the Secretary, in the form and manner required under ~~subsection (e)~~ subsection (d), instances of incidental mortality or injury of marine mammals in the course of that fishery.

(4) (A) The Secretary shall suspend or revoke an authorization granted under this section and shall not issue a decal or other physical evidence of the authorization for any vessel until the owner of such vessel complies with the reporting requirements under ~~subsection (e)~~ subsection (d) and such requirements to take on board an observer under paragraph (3)(B) as are applicable to such vessel. Previous failure to comply with the requirements of section 114 shall not bar authorization under this section for an owner who complies with the requirements of this section.

(B) The Secretary may suspend or revoke an authorization granted under this subsection, and may not issue a decal or other physical evidence of the authorization for any vessel which fails to comply with a take reduction plan or emergency regulations issued under this section.

(C) The owner and master of a vessel which fails to comply with a take reduction plan shall be subject to the penalties of sections 105 and 107, and may be subject to section 106.

(5) (A) The Secretary shall develop, in consultation with the appropriate States, affected Regional Fishery Management Councils, and other interested persons, the means by which the granting and administration of authorizations under this section shall be integrated and coordinated, to the maximum extent practicable, with existing fishery licenses, registrations, and related programs.

(B) The Secretary shall utilize newspapers of general circulation, fishery trade associations, electronic media, and other means of advising commercial fishermen of the provisions of this section and the means by which they can comply with its requirements.

(C) The Secretary is authorized to charge a fee for the granting of an authorization under this section. The level of fees charged under this subparagraph shall not exceed the administrative costs incurred in granting an authorization. Fees collected under this subparagraph shall be available to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere for expenses incurred in the granting and administration of authorizations under this section.

(d) Monitoring of Incidental Takes.— (1) The Secretary shall establish a program to monitor incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals during the course of commercial fishing operations. The purposes of the monitoring program shall be to—

(A) obtain statistically reliable estimates of incidental mortality and serious injury;

(B) determine the reliability of reports of incidental mortality and serious injury under ~~subsection (c)~~ **subsection (d)**; and

(C) identify changes in fishing methods or technology that may increase or decrease incidental mortality and serious injury.

(2) Pursuant to paragraph (1), the Secretary may place observers on board vessels as necessary, subject to the provisions of this section. Observers may, among other tasks—

(A) record incidental mortality and injury, or by catch of other nontarget species;

(B) record numbers of marine mammals sighted; and

(C) perform other scientific investigations.

(3) In determining the distribution of observers among commercial fisheries and vessels within a fishery, the Secretary shall be guided by the following standards:

(A) The requirement to obtain statistically reliable information.

(B) The requirement that assignment of observers is fair and equitable among fisheries and among vessels in a fishery.

(C) The requirement that no individual person or vessel, or group of persons or vessels, be subject to excessive or overly burdensome observer coverage.

(D) To the extent practicable, the need to minimize costs and avoid duplication.

(4) To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall allocate observers among commercial fisheries in accordance with the following priority:

(A) The highest priority for allocation shall be for commercial fisheries that have incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals from stocks listed as endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

(B) The second highest priority for allocation shall be for commercial fisheries that have incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals from strategic stocks.

(C) The third highest priority for allocation shall be for commercial fisheries that have incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals from stocks for which the level of incidental mortality and serious injury is uncertain.

(5) The Secretary may establish an alternative observer program to provide statistically reliable information on the species and number of marine mammals incidentally taken in the course of commercial fishing operations. The alternative observer program may include direct observation of fishing activities from vessels, airplanes, or points on shore.

(6) The Secretary is not required to place an observer on a vessel in a fishery if the Secretary finds that—

(A) in a situation in which harvesting vessels are delivering fish to a processing vessel and the catch is not taken on board the harvesting vessel, statistically reliable information can be obtained from an observer on board the processing vessel to which the fish are delivered;

(B) the facilities on a vessel for quartering of an observer, or for carrying out observer functions, are so inadequate or unsafe that the health or safety of the observer or the safe operation of the vessel would be jeopardized; or

(C) for reasons beyond the control of the Secretary, an observer is not available.

(7) The Secretary may, with the consent of the vessel owner, station an observer on board a vessel engaged in a fishery not listed under ~~subsection (e)(1)(A) (i) or (ii)~~ clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(A).

(8) Any proprietary information collected under this subsection shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except—

(A) to Federal employees whose duties require access to such information;

(B) to State or tribal employees pursuant to an agreement with the Secretary that prevents public disclosure of the identity or business of any person;

(C) when required by court order; or

(D) in the case of scientific information involving fisheries, to employees of Regional Fishery Management Councils who are responsible for fishery management plan development and monitoring.

(9) The Secretary shall prescribe such procedures as may be necessary to preserve such confidentiality, except that the Secretary shall release or make public upon request any such information in aggregate, summary, or other form which does not directly or indirectly disclose the identity or business of any person.

(e) Reporting Requirement.— The owner or operator of a commercial fishing vessel subject to this Act shall report all incidental mortality and injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations to the Secretary by mail or other means acceptable to the Secretary within 48 hours after the end of each fishing trip on a standard postage-paid form to be developed by the Secretary under this section. Such form shall be capable of being readily entered into and usable by an automated or computerized data processing system and shall require the vessel owner or operator to provide the following:

(1) The vessel name, and Federal, State, or tribal registration numbers of the registered vessel.

(2) The name and address of the vessel owner or operator.

(3) The name and description of the fishery.

(4) The species of each marine mammal incidentally killed or injured, and the date, time, and approximate geographic location of such occurrence.

(f) Take Reduction Plans.— (1) The Secretary shall develop and implement a take reduction plan designed to assist in the recovery or prevent the depletion of each strategic stock which interacts with a commercial fishery listed under ~~subsection (e)(1)(A) (i) or (ii)~~ clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(A), and may develop and implement such a plan for any other marine mammal stocks which interact with a commercial fishery listed under ~~subsection (e)(1)(A)(i)~~ subsection (b)(1)(A)(i) which the Secretary determines, after notice and opportunity for public comment, has a high level of mortality and serious injury across a number of such marine mammal stocks.

(2) ~~The immediate goal~~ The goal of a take reduction plan for a strategic stock shall be to reduce, ~~within 6 months of its implementation,~~ the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals incidentally taken in the course of commercial fishing operations to levels less than the potential biological removal level established for that stock under ~~section 117.~~ The long-term goal of the plan shall be to reduce, within 5 years of its implementation, the incidental mortality or serious injury of

~~marine mammals incidentally taken in the course of commercial fishing operations to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate, taking into account the economics of the fishery, the availability of existing technology, and existing State or regional fishery management plans.~~ section 117, considering and accounting for the economics of the fishery, the operations of the fishery, the availability of existing technology, and existing State or regional fishery management plans.

(3) If there is insufficient funding available to develop and implement a take reduction plan for all such stocks that interact with commercial fisheries listed under ~~subsection (c)(1)(A) (i) or (ii) clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(A)~~, the Secretary shall give highest priority to the development and implementation of take reduction plans for species or stocks whose level of incidental mortality and serious injury exceeds the potential biological removal level, those that have a small population size, and those which are declining most rapidly.

(4) Each take reduction plan shall include—

(A) a review of the information in the final stock assessment published under section 117(b) and any substantial new information;

(B) an estimate of the total number and, if possible, age and gender, of animals from the stock that are being incidentally lethally taken or seriously injured each year during the course of commercial fishing operations, by fishery;

(C) recommended regulatory or voluntary measures for the reduction of incidental mortality and serious injury;¹⁷

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Probably should be “injury; and”. See section 11 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act Amendments of 1994 (P.L. 103–238, 108 Stat. 546).

(D) recommended dates for achieving the specific objectives of the plan.

(5) (A) For any stock in which incidental mortality and serious injury from commercial fisheries exceeds the potential biological removal level established under section 117, the plan shall include measures the Secretary expects will reduce, within 6 months of the plan's implementation, such mortality and serious injury to a level below the potential biological removal level.

(B) For any stock in which human-caused mortality and serious injury exceeds the potential biological removal level, other than a stock to which subparagraph (A) applies, the plan shall include measures the Secretary expects will reduce, to the maximum extent practicable within 6 months of the plan's implementation, the incidental mortality and serious injury by such commercial fisheries from that stock. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term “maximum extent practicable” means to the lowest level that is feasible for such fisheries within the 6-month period.

(6) (A) At the earliest possible time (not later than 30 days) after the Secretary issues a final stock assessment under section 117(b) for a strategic stock, the Secretary shall, and for stocks that interact with a fishery listed under ~~subsection (c)(1)(A)(i)~~ subsection (b)(1)(A)(i) for which the Secretary has made a determination under paragraph (1), the Secretary may—

(i) establish a take reduction team for such stock and appoint the members of such team in accordance with subparagraph (C); and

(ii) publish in the Federal Register a notice of the team's establishment, the names of the team's appointed members, the full geographic range of such stock, and a list of all commercial fisheries that cause incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals from such stock.

(B) The Secretary may request a take reduction team to address a stock that extends over one or more regions or fisheries, or multiple stocks within a region or fishery, if the Secretary determines that doing so would facilitate the development and implementation of plans required under this subsection.

(C) Members of take reduction teams shall have expertise regarding the conservation or biology of the marine mammal species which the take reduction plan will address, or the fishing practices which result in the incidental mortality and serious injury of such species. Members shall include representatives of Federal agencies, each coastal State which has fisheries which interact with the species or stock, appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, interstate fisheries commissions, academic and scientific organizations, environmental groups, all commercial and recreational fisheries groups and gear types which incidentally take the species or stock, Alaska Native organizations or Indian tribal organizations, and others as the Secretary deems appropriate. Take reduction teams shall, to the maximum extent practicable, consist of an equitable balance among representatives of resource user interests and nonuser interests.

(D) Take reduction teams shall not be subject to chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code. Meetings of take reduction teams shall be open to the public, and prior notice of meetings shall be made public in a timely fashion.

(E) Members of take reduction teams shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed by the Secretary, upon request, for reasonable travel costs and expenses incurred in performing their duties as members of the team.

(7) Where the human-caused mortality and serious injury from a strategic stock is estimated to be equal to or greater than the potential biological removal level established under section 117 for such stock and such stock interacts with a fishery listed under ~~subsection (c)(1)(A) (i) or (ii)~~ clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(A), the following procedures shall apply in the development of the take reduction plan for the stock:

(A) (i) Not later than 6 months after the date of establishment of a take reduction team for the stock, the team shall submit a draft take reduction plan for such stock to the Secretary, consistent with the other provisions of this section.

(ii) Such draft take reduction plan shall be developed by consensus. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the team shall advise the Secretary in writing on the range of possibilities considered by the team, and the views of both the majority and minority.

(B) (i) The Secretary shall take the draft take reduction plan into consideration and, not later than 60 days after the submission of the draft plan by the team, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register the plan proposed by the team, any changes proposed by the Secretary with an explanation of the reasons therefor, and proposed regulations to implement such plan, for public review and comment during a period of not to exceed 90 days.

(ii) In the event that the take reduction team does not submit a draft plan to the Secretary within 6 months, the Secretary shall, not later than 8 months after the establishment of the team, publish in the Federal Register a proposed take reduction plan and implementing regulations, for public review and comment during a period of not to exceed 90 days.

(C) Not later than 60 days after the close of the comment period required under subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall issue a final take reduction plan and implementing regulations, consistent with the other provisions of this section.

(D) The Secretary shall, during a period of 30 days after publication of a final take reduction plan, utilize newspapers of general circulation, fishery trade associations, electronic media, and other means of advising commercial fishermen of the requirements of the plan and how to comply with them.

(E) The Secretary and the take reduction team shall meet every 6 months, or at such other intervals as the Secretary determines are necessary, to monitor the implementation of the final take reduction plan until such time that the Secretary determines that the objectives of such plan have been met.

(F) The Secretary shall amend the take reduction plan and implementing regulations as necessary to meet the requirements of this section, in accordance with the procedures in this section for the issuance of such plans and regulations.

~~(8) Where the human-caused mortality and serious injury from a strategic stock is estimated to be less than the potential biological removal level established under section 117 for such stock and such stock interacts with a fishery listed under subsection (c)(1)(A) (i) or (ii), or for any marine mammal stocks which interact with a commercial fishery listed under subsection (c)(1)(A)(i) for which the Secretary has made a determination under paragraph (1), the following procedures shall apply in the development of the take reduction plan for such stock:~~

~~(A) (i) Not later than 11 months after the date of establishment of a take reduction team for the stock, the team shall submit a draft take reduction plan for the stock to the Secretary, consistent with the other provisions of this section.~~

~~(ii) Such draft take reduction plan shall be developed by consensus. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the team shall advise the Secretary in writing on the range of possibilities considered by the team, and the views of both the majority and minority.~~

~~(B) (i) The Secretary shall take the draft take reduction plan into consideration and, not later than 60 days after the submission of the draft plan by the team, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register the plan proposed by the team, any changes proposed by the Secretary with an explanation of the reasons therefor, and proposed regulations to implement such plan, for public review and comment during a period of not to exceed 90 days.~~

~~(ii) In the event that the take reduction team does not submit a draft plan to the Secretary within 11 months, the Secretary shall, not later than 13 months after the establishment of the team, publish in the Federal Register a proposed take reduction plan and implementing regulations, for public review and comment during a period of not to exceed 90 days.~~

~~(C) Not later than 60 days after the close of the comment period required under subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall issue a final take reduction plan and implementing regulations, consistent with the other provisions of this section.~~

~~(D) The Secretary shall, during a period of 30 days after publication of a final take reduction plan, utilize newspapers of general circulation, fishery trade associations, electronic media, and other means of advising commercial fishermen of the requirements of the plan and how to comply with them.~~

~~(E) The Secretary and the take reduction team shall meet on an annual basis, or at such other intervals as the Secretary determines are necessary, to monitor the implementation of the final take reduction plan until such time that the Secretary determines that the objectives of such plan have been met.~~

~~(F) The Secretary shall amend the take reduction plan and implementing regulations as necessary to meet the requirements of this section, in accordance with the procedures in this section for the issuance of such plans and regulations.~~

~~(9)~~ ~~8~~ In implementing a take reduction plan developed pursuant to this subsection, the Secretary may, where necessary to implement a take reduction plan to protect or restore a marine mammal stock or species covered by such plan, promulgate regulations which include, but are not limited to, measures to—

- (A) establish fishery-specific limits on incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in commercial fisheries or restrict commercial fisheries by time or area;
 - (B) require the use of alternative commercial fishing gear or techniques and new technologies, encourage the development of such gear or technology, or convene expert skippers' panels;
 - (C) educate commercial fishermen, through workshops and other means, on the importance of reducing the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in affected commercial fisheries; and
 - (D) monitor, in accordance with ~~subsection (d)~~ **subsection (c)**, the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce the level of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- (10) 9** (A) Notwithstanding paragraph (6), in the case of any stock to which paragraph (1) applies for which a final stock assessment has not been published under section 117(b)(3) by April 1, 1995, due to a proceeding under section 117(b)(2), or any Federal court review of such proceeding, the Secretary shall establish a take reduction team under paragraph (6) for such stock as if a final stock assessment had been published.
- (B) The draft stock assessment published for such stock under section 117(b)(1) shall be deemed the final stock assessment for purposes of preparing and implementing a take reduction plan for such stock under this section.
- (C) Upon publication of a final stock assessment for such stock under section 117(b)(3) the Secretary shall immediately reconvene the take reduction team for such stock for the purpose of amending the take reduction plan, and any regulations issued to implement such plan, if necessary, to reflect the final stock assessment or court action. Such amendments shall be made in accordance with paragraph (7)(F) ~~or (8)(F), as appropriate.~~
- (D) A draft stock assessment may only be used as the basis for a take reduction plan under this paragraph for a period of not to exceed two years, or until a final stock assessment is published, whichever is earlier. If, at the end of the two-year period, a final stock assessment has not been published, the Secretary shall categorize such stock under section 117(a)(5)(A) and shall revoke any regulations to implement a take reduction plan for such stock.
- (E) Subparagraph (D) shall not apply for any period beyond two years during which a final stock assessment for such stock has not been published due to review of a proceeding on such stock assessment by a Federal court. Immediately upon final action by such court, the Secretary shall proceed under subparagraph (C).
- ~~(11) Take reduction plans developed under this section for a species or stock listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) shall be consistent with any recovery plan developed for such species or stock under section 4 of such Act.~~

(g) Emergency Regulations.— (1) If the Secretary finds that the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals from commercial fisheries is having, or is likely to have, an immediate and significant adverse impact on a stock or species, the Secretary shall take actions as follows:

- (A) In the case of a stock or species for which a take reduction plan is in effect, the Secretary shall—
 - (i) prescribe emergency regulations that, consistent with such plan to the maximum extent practicable, reduce incidental mortality and serious injury in that fishery; and

(ii) approve and implement, on an expedited basis, any amendments to such plan that are recommended by the take reduction team to address such adverse impact.

(B) In the case of a stock or species for which a take reduction plan is being developed, the Secretary shall—

(i) prescribe emergency regulations to reduce such incidental mortality and serious injury in that fishery; and

(ii) approve and implement, on an expedited basis, such plan, which shall provide methods to address such adverse impact if still necessary.

(C) In the case of a stock or species for which a take reduction plan does not exist and is not being developed, or in the case of a commercial fishery listed under ~~subsection (c)(1)(A)~~ ~~(iii)~~ subsection (b)(1)(A)(iii) which the Secretary believes may be contributing to such adverse impact, the Secretary shall ¹⁸—

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So in law. The relationship between “shall” in the matter preceding clause (i) and “may” in clause (iii) is not apparent.

(i) prescribe emergency regulations to reduce such incidental mortality and serious injury in that fishery, to the extent necessary to mitigate such adverse impact;

(ii) immediately review the stock assessment for such stock or species and the classification of such commercial fishery under this section to determine if a take reduction team should be established; and

(iii) may, ¹⁸ where necessary to address such adverse impact on a species or stock listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), place observers on vessels in a commercial fishery listed under ~~subsection (c)(1)(A)(iii)~~ subsection (b)(1)(A)(iii), if the Secretary has reason to believe such vessels may be causing the incidental mortality and serious injury to marine mammals from such stock.

(2) Prior to taking action under paragraph (1) (A), (B), or (C), the Secretary shall consult with the Marine Mammal Commission, all appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, State fishery managers, and the appropriate take reduction team (if established).

(3) Emergency regulations prescribed under this subsection—

(A) shall be published in the Federal Register, together with an explanation thereof;

(B) shall remain in effect for not more than 180 days or until the end of the applicable commercial fishing season, whichever is earlier; and

(C) may be terminated by the Secretary at an earlier date by publication in the Federal Register of a notice of termination, if the Secretary determines that the reasons for emergency regulations no longer exist.

(4) If the Secretary finds that incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in a commercial fishery is continuing to have an immediate and significant adverse impact on a stock or species, the Secretary may extend the emergency regulations for an additional period of not more than 90 days or until reasons for the emergency no longer exist, whichever is earlier.

(h g) Penalties.— Except as provided in ~~subsection (c)~~ **subsection (b)**, any person who violates this section shall be subject to the provisions of sections 105 and 107, and may be subject to section 106 as the Secretary shall establish by regulations.

(i h) Assistance.— The Secretary shall provide assistance to Regional Fishery Management Councils, States, interstate fishery commissions, and Indian tribal organizations in meeting the goal of reducing incidental mortality and serious injury to ~~insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate~~ **levels that have no more than a negligible impact on a species or stock.**

(j i) Contributions.— For purposes of carrying out this section, the Secretary may accept, solicit, receive, hold, administer, and use gifts, devises, and bequests.

(k j) Consultation With Secretary of the Interior.— The Secretary shall consult with the Secretary of the Interior prior to taking actions or making determinations under this section that affect or relate to species or population stocks of marine mammals for which the Secretary of the Interior is responsible under this title.

(l k) Definitions.— As used in this section and section 101(a)(5)(E), each of the terms “fishery” and “vessel of the United States” has the same meaning it does in section 3 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802).

(l) Notwithstanding any other requirement of this section, if the potential biological removal level for a stock is designated as unknown—

(1) no commercial fishery may be classified under subsection (b)(1) based on the incidental mortality or serious injury of such stock by such commercial fishery; and

(2) no take reduction team may be convened or take reduction plan implemented with respect to such stock pursuant to this section.

Sec. 120. PACIFIC COAST TASK FORCE; GULF OF MAINE.

(a) Pinniped Removal Authority.— Notwithstanding any other provision of this title, the Secretary may permit the intentional lethal taking of pinnipeds in accordance with this section.

(b) Application.— **(1)** A State may apply to the Secretary to authorize the intentional lethal taking of individually identifiable pinnipeds which are having a significant negative impact on the decline or recovery of salmonid fishery stocks which—

(A) have been listed as threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(B) the Secretary finds are approaching threatened species or endangered species status (as those terms are defined in that Act); or

te through the Ballard Locks at Seattle, Washington.

(2) Any such application shall include a means of identifying the individual pinniped or pinnipeds, and shall include a detailed description of the problem interaction and expected benefits of the taking.

(c) Actions in Response to Application.— **(1)** Within 15 days of receiving an application, the Secretary shall determine whether the application has produced sufficient evidence to warrant establishing a Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force to address the situation described in the application. If the Secretary determines sufficient evidence has been provided, the Secretary shall establish a Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force and publish a notice in the Federal Register requesting public comment on the application.

(2) A Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force established under paragraph (1) shall consist of designated employees of the Department of Commerce, scientists who are knowledgeable about the pinniped interaction that the application addresses, representatives of affected conservation and fishing community organizations, Indian Treaty tribes, the States, and such other organizations as the Secretary deems appropriate.

(3) Within 60 days after establishment, and after reviewing public comments in response to the Federal Register notice under paragraph (1), the Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force shall—

(A) recommend to the Secretary whether to approve or deny the proposed intentional lethal taking of the pinniped or pinnipeds, including along with the recommendation a description of the specific pinniped individual or individuals, the proposed location, time, and method of such taking, criteria for evaluating the success of the action, and the duration of the intentional lethal taking authority; and

(B) suggest nonlethal alternatives, if available and practicable, including a recommended course of action.

(4) Within 30 days after receipt of recommendations from the Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force, the Secretary shall either approve or deny the application. If such application is approved, the Secretary shall immediately take steps to implement the intentional lethal taking, which shall be performed by Federal or State agencies, or qualified individuals under contract to such agencies.

(5) After implementation of an approved application, the Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force shall evaluate the effectiveness of the permitted intentional lethal taking or alternative actions implemented. If implementation was ineffective in eliminating the problem interaction, the Task Force shall recommend additional actions. If the implementation was effective, the Task Force shall so advise the Secretary, and the Secretary shall disband the Task Force.

(d) **Considerations.**— In considering whether an application should be approved or denied, the Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force and the Secretary shall consider—

(1) population trends, feeding habits, the location of the pinniped interaction, how and when the interaction occurs, and how many individual pinnipeds are involved;

(2) past efforts to nonlethally deter such pinnipeds, and whether the applicant has demonstrated that no feasible and prudent alternatives exist and that the applicant has taken all reasonable nonlethal steps without success;

(3) the extent to which such pinnipeds are causing undue injury or impact to, or imbalance with, other species in the ecosystem, including fish populations; and

(4) the extent to which such pinnipeds are exhibiting behavior that presents an ongoing threat to public safety.

(e) **Limitation.**— The Secretary shall not approve the intentional lethal taking of any pinniped from a species or stock that is—

(1) listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(2) depleted under this Act; or

(3) a strategic stock.

(f) **Temporary Marine Mammal Removal Authority on the Waters of the Columbia River or Its Tributaries.**—

(1) **Removal authority.**— Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Secretary may issue a permit to an eligible entity to authorize the intentional lethal taking on the waters of the Columbia River and its tributaries of individually identifiable sea lions that are part of a

population or stock that is not categorized under this Act as depleted or strategic for the purpose of protecting—

(A) species of salmon, steelhead, or eulachon that are listed as endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); and

(B) species of lamprey or sturgeon that are not so listed as endangered or threatened but are listed as a species of concern.

(2) Permit process.—

(A) **In general.**— An eligible entity may apply to the Secretary for a permit under this subsection.

(B) **Timelines and procedures of application.**— The timelines and procedures described in subsection (c) shall apply to applications for permits under this subsection in the same manner such timelines apply to applications under subsection (b).

(C) **Coordination.**— The Secretary shall establish procedures to coordinate issuance of permits under this subsection, including application procedures and timelines, delegation and revocation of permits to and between eligible entities, monitoring, periodic review, and geographic, seasonal take, and species-specific considerations.

(D) **Duration of permit.**— A permit under this subsection shall be effective for a period of not more than 5 years, and may be renewed by the Secretary.

(3) **Limitations on annual takings.**— The Secretary shall apply the process for determining limitations on annual take of sea lions under subsection (c) to determinations on limitations under this subsection, and the cumulative number of sea lions authorized to be taken each year under all permits in effect under this subsection shall not exceed 10 percent of the annual potential biological removal level for sea lions.

(4) Qualified individuals.— Intentional lethal takings under this subsection shall—

(A) be humane within the meaning of such term under section 3(4);

(B) require that capture, husbandry, transportation, and euthanasia protocols are based on standards propagated by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and that primary euthanasia be limited to humane chemical methods; and

(C) be implemented by agencies or qualified individuals described in subsection (c) (4), or by individuals employed by the eligible entities described in paragraph (6).

(5) **Suspension of permitting authority.**— If, 5 years after the date of the enactment of the Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act, the Secretary, after consulting with State and tribal fishery managers, determines that lethal removal authority is no longer necessary to protect salmonid and other fish species from sea lion predation, the Secretary shall suspend the issuance of permits under this subsection.

(6) Eligible entity defined.—

(A) **Definition.**— In this subsection, the term “eligible entity” means—

(i) with respect to removal in the mainstem of the Columbia River, from river mile 112 to the McNary Dam and its tributaries in the State of Washington, and its tributaries in the State of Oregon above Bonneville Dam, the State of Washington, the State of Oregon, and the State of Idaho;

(ii) with respect to removal in the mainstem Columbia River from river mile 112 to the McNary Dam and its tributaries within the State of Washington and in any of its tributaries above Bonneville Dam within the State of Oregon, the Nez Perce Tribe, the

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation; and

(iii) with respect to removal in the Willamette River and other tributaries of the Columbia River within the State of Oregon below Bonneville Dam, a committee recognized by the Secretary under subparagraph (D).

(B) Delegation authority.— The Secretary may allow eligible entities described in clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (A) to delegate their authority under a permit under this subsection to the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission for removal in the mainstem of the Columbia River above river mile 112 and below McNary Dam, in the Columbia River tributaries in the State of Washington, or in tributaries within the State of Oregon above Bonneville Dam and below McNary Dam.

(C) Additional delegation authority.— The Secretary may allow an eligible entity described in subparagraph (A)(i) to delegate its authority under a permit under this subsection to any entity described in subclause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (A) with respect to removal in the mainstem of the Columbia River above river mile 112 and below McNary Dam, in the Columbia River tributaries in the State of Washington, or in tributaries in the State of Oregon above Bonneville Dam and below McNary Dam.

(D) Committee requirements.—

(i) In general.— The Secretary shall recognize a committee established in accordance with this subparagraph as being eligible for a permit under this subsection, for purposes of subparagraph (A)(iii).

(ii) Membership.— A committee established under this subparagraph shall consist of the State of Oregon and each of the following:

(I) The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians or the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community, or both.

(II) The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs or the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, or both.

(iii) Majority agreement required.— A committee established under this subparagraph may take action with respect to a permit application and removal under this subsection only with majority agreement by the committee members.

(iv) Nonapplicability of faca.— The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to a committee established under this subparagraph.

(7) Individual exception.— For purposes of this subsection, any sea lion located upstream of river mile 112 and downstream of McNary Dam, or in any tributary to the Columbia River that includes spawning habitat of threatened or endangered salmon or steelhead is deemed to be individually identifiable.

(8) Significant negative impact exception.— For purposes of this subsection, any sea lion located in the mainstem of the Columbia River upstream of river mile 112 and downstream of McNary Dam, or in any tributary to the Columbia River that includes spawning habitat of threatened or endangered salmon or steelhead is deemed to be having a significant negative impact, within the meaning of subsection (b)(1).

(9) Definition.— In this subsection, the term “Indian tribe” has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(g) Regionwide Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Study.—

(1) The Secretary may conduct a study, of not less than three high predation areas in anadromous fish migration corridors within the Northwest Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service, on the interaction between fish and pinnipeds. In conducting the study, the Secretary shall consult with other State and Federal agencies with expertise in pinniped-fishery interaction. The study shall evaluate—

- (A) fish behavior in the presence of predators generally;
- (B) holding times and passage rates of anadromous fish stocks in areas where such fish are vulnerable to predation;
- (C) whether additional facilities exist, or could be reasonably developed, that could improve escapement for anadromous fish; and
- (D) other issues the Secretary considers relevant.

(2) Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary may, not later than 18 months after the commencement of the study under this subsection, transmit a report on the results of the study to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries¹⁹ of the House of Representatives.

(3) The study conducted under this subsection may not be used by the Secretary as a reason for delaying or deferring a determination or consideration under subsection (c) or (d).

(h) **Gulf of Maine Task Force.**— The Secretary shall establish a Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force to advise the Secretary on issues or problems regarding pinnipeds interacting in a dangerous or damaging manner with aquaculture resources in the Gulf of Maine. No later than 2 years from the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall after notice and opportunity for public comment submit to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries¹⁹ of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing recommended available alternatives to mitigate such interactions.

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The Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries of the House of Representatives was abolished by House Resolution No. 6, One Hundred Fourth Congress, Jan. 4, 1995. The former jurisdiction of such committee is divided among the Committee on Resources, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(i) **Requirements Applicable to Task Forces.**— (1) Any task force established under this section—

- (A) shall to the maximum extent practicable, consist of an equitable balance among representatives of resource user interests and nonuser interests; and
- (B) shall not be subject to chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) Meetings of any task force established under this section shall be open to the public, and prior notice of those meetings shall be given to the public by the task force in a timely fashion.

(j) **Gulf of Maine Harbor Porpoise.**— (1) Nothing in section 117 shall prevent the Secretary from publishing a stock assessment for Gulf of Maine harbor porpoise in an expedited fashion.

(2) In developing and implementing a take reduction plan under section 118 for Gulf of Maine harbor porpoise, the Secretary shall consider all actions already taken to reduce incidental mortality and serious injury of such stock, and may, based on the recommendations of the take reduction team for such stock, modify the time period required for compliance with ~~section 118(f)(5)(A)~~ section 118(e)(5), but in no case may such modification extend the date of compliance beyond April 1, 1997.

SEC. 121. OBJECTIVE APPLICATION OF BEST AVAILABLE SCIENTIFIC AND COMMERCIAL DATA.

All decisions and determinations made under this title shall be made based solely upon the objective application of the best scientific and commercial data available and without application of precautionary factors or assumptions or any other factors or assumptions that bias the objective application of the best scientific and commercial data available, including decisions and determinations regarding—

- (1) likely marine mammal presence;*
- (2) the estimated number of marine mammals in a species or stock;*
- (3) the estimated population trend or status of a marine mammal species or stock;*
- (4) the estimated geographic range of a marine mammal species or stock;*
- (5) the occurrence and nature of take of marine mammals;*
- (6) the likelihood and extent of exposure of marine mammals to human impacts; and*
- (7) the geographic range of a marine mammal species or stock.*

2. Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023

[As Amended Through P.L. 119–4, Enacted March 15, 2025]

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JJ—NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES

TITLE **I**—NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES AND REGULATIONS

Sec. 101. NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES
AND REGULATIONS.

(a) **In General.**— Notwithstanding any other provision of law except as provided in subsection (b), for the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on December 31, ~~2028~~ 2035, the Final Rule amending the regulations implementing the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (86 Fed. Reg. 51970) shall be deemed sufficient to ensure that the continued Federal and State authorizations of the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries are in full compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). The National Marine Fisheries Service shall—

(1) throughout the period described in the preceding sentence, in consultation with affected States and fishing industry participants, promote the innovation and adoption of gear technologies in the fisheries described in the preceding sentence, in order to implement additional whale protection measures by December 31, ~~2028~~ 2035;

(2) promulgate new regulations for the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries consistent with the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) that take effect by December 31, ~~2028~~ 2035, utilizing existing and innovative gear technologies, as appropriate; and

(3) in consultation with affected States, submit an annual report to Congress on the status of North Atlantic Right Whales, the actions taken and plans to implement measures expected to not exceed Potential Biological Removal by December 31, ~~2028~~ 2035, the amount of serious injury and mortality by fishery and country, and the proportion of the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries that have transitioned to innovative gear technologies that reduce harm to the North Atlantic Right Whale.

(b) **Exception.**— The provisions of subsection (a) shall not apply to an existing emergency rule, or any action taken to extend or make final an emergency rule that is in place on the date of enactment of this Act, affecting lobster and Jonah crab.

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Summary

- (1) 89 amendments.
- (2) 0 automated notifications.

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