

STATEMENT FOR USE IN RESPONSE TO SURTASS LFA EMAIL / MAIL

Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active (SURTASS LFA) Sonar response to correspondence (mail and E-mail):

I have your message expressing opposition to the operation of Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active (SURTASS LFA) Sonar as described in our recently published Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). I believe that your concern is misplaced. The Navy is committed to working with experts in the field of marine mammals, consulting with federal and state agencies, and with environmental interest groups having interest in marine environmental protection to ensure effective and environmentally safe use of this important national defense tool. To that end, the Navy sponsored the scientific research program, which is key to our safe interaction with marine mammals. The scientific research program results, as outlined in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), indicate no significant impact on marine mammals will result from the operations of the system as described.

The scientific research that forms the basis for the analysis in the DEIS was conducted in accordance with all state and federal environmental requirements and without harmful impact on marine animals. As required by Executive Order 12114, Overseas Environmental Assessments were prepared for the scientific research. In addition, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a permit for the scientific research. Previous legal challenges in Federal District Court in Hawaii have confirmed that the requirements of applicable environmental law were met in all cases. Extensive protective and mitigation operational protocols are proposed in the DEIS for employment of SURTASS LFA to ensure that marine mammals, as well as humans, will not be exposed to harmful levels of sound.

I hope that this information is helpful. The process of research data collection, and the results of the scientific research program for the SURTASS LFA Sonar system appear on the following Internet web site, <http://eisteam.home.mindspring.com>.