



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20230

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

May 18, 2001

Stephen R. Spencer, Ph.D.  
Natural Resource Damage Assessment and  
Restoration Regional Coordinator  
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 649  
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Dear Dr. Spencer:

As you are be aware, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has determined that a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) is the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis document for establishing the Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program (RRP Program). Our determination is based on the fact that significant impacts may result from implementation of this program.

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA emphasize agency cooperation early in the NEPA process. 40 C.F.R. § 1501.6 states: "Upon request of the lead agency, any other Federal agency which has jurisdiction by law shall be a cooperating agency. In addition, any other Federal agency which has special expertise with respect to any environmental issue, which should be addressed in the statement, may be a cooperating agency upon the request of the lead agency." Because the Department of the Interior, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other bureaus, is a natural resource trustee and may have special expertise on issues related to natural resource damage assessment, I invite your agency to be a cooperating agency in the development of the PEIS.

Please find enclosed a draft of the Notice of Intent to begin formal scoping for the PEIS. Please let me know, as soon as possible, if the Department or any of the bureaus wish to participate as a cooperating agency in the development of this PEIS.

Feel free to contact me on this matter at (301) 713-3038 x192.

Sincerely,

Ann H. Berger  
Damage Assessment and Restoration  
Program Coordinator



Enclosure

cc: Linda Burlington, NOAA/GCNR  
Jason Forman, NOAA/GCNR  
Brian Julius, NOAA/DAC  
John Kern, NOAA/DAC  
Tom Moore, NOAA/RC  
Karolien Debusschere, LOSCO