



**Notice of Coastal Consistency Review
State of Connecticut**

Federal Consistency Determination for Proposed Modifications to the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan, to Include Research Exceptions to the Plan Requirements Implemented in 50 CFR Parts 229.33 and 229.34

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has received a request submitted by The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) pursuant to Section 307(c)(1) of the Coastal Zone Management Act to review a proposed action affecting coastal resources for consistency with the enforceable policies of Connecticut's federally approved Coastal Management Program as contained in Sections 22a-90 through 22a-112 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

This proposed rule, if adopted, would modify the research provisions in both the *Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan-New England* and the *Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan-Mid-Atlantic* to provide a new approval process under the Plans that would allow: research into ways to reduce harbor porpoise bycatch; and, increase knowledge of biological information regarding harbor porpoise that could be conducted during commercial fishing operations. The rule would add a definition of "Research Plan" to 50 CFR 229.2, which would specify the components that must be included to apply for the research exception. In addition, the proposed rule would also establish the following requirements: 1. that any research under the plan must be identified as a research priority by the Team; 2. the research must be expected to minimize harbor porpoise bycatch; and 3. the proposed research may also incidentally reduce bycatch of other protected species in gillnet fisheries.

Specific questions regarding the proposed actions should be directed by email to Elizabeth Stratton at Elizabeth.Stratton@noaa.gov. Detailed information regarding the proposed Amendments will be available on the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan [webpage](#) after publication in the *Federal Register*.

Interested persons may obtain a copy of the application from the above contact or by sending a request for an electronic copy to Karen Michaels at CT DEEP at Karen.Michaels@ct.gov. All interested parties are invited to express their views on this action. Comments regarding this application may be submitted via electronic mail to Karen.Michaels@ct.gov no later than fifteen (15) days from the publication date of this notice.

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Approved by:

Brian P. Thompson, Director
Land & Water Resources Division
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse