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Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

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May 30, 2001

Donna Weiting, Chief
Marine Mammal Conservation Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226

Dear Ms. Weiting:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rulemaking (Federal Register Notice, Vol. 66, No. 53) for the taking of marine mammals incidental to Navy Operations of Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active Sonar (SURTASS LFA). On behalf of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC), I am forwarding the following comments for your consideration:

The majority of members of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine SAC are not convinced that research has shown that SURTASS LFA does not pose a threat to humpback whales at 180 decibels. Therefore, the SAC believes that the Navy should increase the safety zone to ensure that SURTASS LFA sound levels do not penetrate waters within 12 nautical miles of the coastline at any level. In addition, the SAC would like the National Marine Fisheries Service to better address protection measures to minimize potential impacts to humpback whales along their migration corridors.

Sincerely,

Naomi McIntosh
Acting Sanctuary Manager