

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

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St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

June 2, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Leslie Craig  
Southeast Region Supervisor, NOAA Restoration Center

FROM:

Virginia M. Fay  
Assistant Regional Administrator, Habitat Conservation Division

SUBJECT:

Essential fish habitat review of the construction of the Restoring  
Living Shorelines and Reefs in Mississippi Estuaries project

In response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, NOAA and the other Trustee agencies propose to fund the construction of four miles of living shoreline breakwaters, five acres of intertidal reefs, and 267 acres of subtidal reef at a total of eight locations in coastal Mississippi. The approximate cost of construction is \$30 million using Phase IV Early Restoration funds. The activities described in the EFH assessment would provide temporary short and long term minor impacts to water bottoms and water column categorized as essential fish habitat (EFH) under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

As specified in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, EFH consultation is required for federal actions which may adversely affect EFH. The NOAA's Restoration Center prepared an EFH assessment for this project and provided the document for our review by electronic mail dated May 27, 2015. The Southeast Region's Habitat Conservation Division (SER HCD) has reviewed the EFH assessment and finds the document adequately evaluates potential project impacts to EFH supportive of a number of federally managed fishery species. While project implementation would temporarily impact water bottoms and water column supportive of a variety of federally managed fishery species, best management practices to minimize short term impacts have been developed and were included in the EFH assessment.. Additionally, SERO HCD believes the proposed work should enhance the fishery productivity of the project area and concurs with the statements in the EFH assessment that effects of project implementation are expected to be minor and would have no substantial impacts to EFH. Therefore, SER HCD has no EFH conservation recommendations to provide pursuant to Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act at this time. Further consultation on this matter is not necessary unless future modifications are proposed and such actions may result in adverse impacts to EFH.

cc:

F/SER – Giordano

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