UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

June 29, 2009

Anne Elston
SRI International
333 Ravenswood Avenue, G 234
Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/EIR) for Replacement of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, California (CEQ # 20090172)

Dear Ms. Elston:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and provided comments to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on January 12, 2009. We rated the DEIS as Environmental Concerns - Insufficient Information (EC-2) and expressed concerns regarding impacts to air quality from construction emissions. We also recommended a more robust mitigation for impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub, a sensitive vegetative community.

We appreciate the additional information regarding the potential health impacts from diesel exhaust emissions in the response to comments section of the FEIS, which identifies the unavoidable exposure that residential receptors would receive along the haul truck route (p. 7). We commend NOAA for identifying mitigation measures to reduce these pollutants, including requesting construction and demolition contractors to implement *SmartWay Truck Efficiency* and anti-idling practices, and encouraging contractors to use alternative fuels and retrofit existing engines in construction equipment to the extent that equipment is available and cost effective (p. 70). Because residential receptors are susceptible to human health effects from exposure to diesel emissions within a distance of 300 meters from the emission sources (response to comments, p. 6), we recommend that NOAA include commitments to these emission mitigation measures in the Record of Decision (ROD) and in the bid requirements section of all requests for bids. We also recommend that NOAA consider providing advanced notification of construction to residents along the truck haul route to inform them of potential health risks and any exposure avoidance measures they should consider, such as closing their windows while diesel-powered

equipment and vehicles are operating near their homes, especially during the 5-month grading/site preparation phase.

EPA also appreciates the clarification regarding mitigation for the loss of 1.7 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub. We understand that habitat in a portion of the existing ecological preserve will be enhanced to mitigate this loss.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this FEIS/EIR. If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Karen Vitulano, the lead reviewer for this project, at 415-947-4178 or vitulano.karen@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office (CED-2)