



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDER NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST
BOX 102, NAVAL AIR STATION
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32212-0102

5090
Ser N46E/0130
February 7, 2002

Andreas Mager, Jr.
Assistant Regional Administrator
United States Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service, SE Regional Office
Habitat Conservation Division
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Lisamarie Carrubba, Ph.D.
Ecologist
United States Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Wildlife Refuge
Carr 301, km. 5.1
Boqueron, PR 00622-0510

Dear Mr. Mager and Dr. Carrubba:

In accordance with Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Navy is requesting abbreviated consultation process on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for a proposed combined Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX)/multiple Unit Level Training (ULT) exercise at the Vieques Inner Range. The exercise is scheduled for intermittent use for approximately three weeks starting in late March to early April 2002. The enclosed EFH Assessment, as required by 50 CFR 600.920(g), provides information on the potential adverse effects from this exercise on the EFH.

Based on the information contained in the enclosed EFH Assessment, we have concluded that this COMPTUEX/multiple ULT exercise planned for March/April 2002 will not have a significant adverse affect on the EFH or the managed species within the Vieques Inner Range. We are requesting your expedited concurrence with our findings and would appreciate your response in accordance with Section 305(b)(4)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, no later than March 1, 2002.

If you have any questions on the enclosed package or need further information, Navy Region Southeast point of contact is Mr. Bruce Toth, N46EC, contracted Environmental Consultant, (904) 542-4873.

Thank you for your continued efforts in assisting us with our EFH responsibilities.

Sincerely,


H. J. KIRCHER, IV
Captain, U. S. Navy
Commander
Acting

Enclosure: 1. EFH Consultation Package