UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms. Hallie G. Templeton
1101 15th Street, NW 11th Floor
Washington, DC 20015

Re: FOIA Request DOC-NOAA-2018-000453

Dear Hallie G. Templeton,

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request which was received by our office on December 19, 2017, in which you requested:

> **REVISED DESCRIPTION**: This request pertains specifically to any ESA Section 7 consultations, and NEPA categorical exclusion justifications, NEPA environmental assessments, and NEPA environmental impact statements, including any records related to the preparation of such documents and the documents themselves. These records should include, but not be limited to, any internal or external correspondence regarding the application of the aforementioned laws and preparation of assessments, statements, and consultations; any meetings or communications or other contact—including meeting minutes and scheduling notes—that involve the application of the aforementioned laws and preparation of assessments, statements, and consultations; as well as any findings, conclusions, recommendations, or actions taken.

After searching our files we were unable to locate any records that are responsive to your request but can provide some information. In releasing this Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) for aquaculture research, the National Sea Grant Office included language that requires applicants to provide information to allow for a detailed environmental compliance assessment under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Proposals for this Federal Funding Opportunity are due on March 30th, 2018 and environmental compliance review of these projects will not begin until after applications have been received and subjected to a selection panel. Final review of NEPA compliance for each selected project will adhere to the requirements and guidance in the NOAA Companion Manual for NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A.

Although no records were located during our search, you have the right to appeal a "no document found" response. All appeals should include a statement of the reasons why you believe the FOIA response was not satisfactory. An appeal based on documents in this release must be received within 90 calendar days of the date of this response letter at the following address:

Assistant General Counsel for Litigation, Employment, and Oversight
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of General Counsel

Room 5875
14th and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

An appeal may also be sent by e-mail to FOIAAppeals@doc.gov or by FOIAonline at https://foiaonline.regulations.gov/foia/action/public/home#.

For your appeal to be complete, it must include the following items:

- a copy of the original request,
- our response to your request,
- a statement explaining why the withheld records should be made available, and why the denial of the records was in error.
- "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" must appear on your appeal letter. It should also be written on your envelope, e-mail subject line, or your fax cover sheet.

FOIA appeals posted to the e-mail box, FOIAonline, or Office after normal business hours will be deemed received on the next business day. If the 90th calendar day for submitting an appeal falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal public holiday, an appeal received by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, the next business day will be deemed timely.

FOIA grants requesters the right to challenge an agency's final action in federal court. Before doing so, an adjudication of an administrative appeal is ordinarily required.

The Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), an office created within the National Archives and Records Administration, offers free mediation services to FOIA requesters. They may be contacted in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
Room 2510
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
Email: ogis@nara.gov
Phone: 301-837-1996
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

If you have questions regarding this correspondence please contact Annie Thomson at annie.thomson@noaa.gov or by phone at (301) 734-1106, or the NOAA FOIA Public Liaison Robert Swisher at (301) 628-5755. Please refer to your FOIA request tracking number DOC-NOAA-2018-000453 when contacting us.

Sincerely,

Mark H. Graff
FOIA Officer/Bureau Chief Privacy Officer (BCPO)
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration