



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

**OCT 10 2008**

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), enclosed for your review is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Amendment 4 to the Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP) of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and Amendment 8 to the Joint Spiny Lobster FMP of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.

This FEIS is prepared pursuant to NEPA to assess the environmental impacts associated with NOAA proceeding with a regulatory action being considered by the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, which are needed to address the importation of spiny lobsters below the respective Continental and Caribbean U.S. minimum size limits, and below the size at first maturity. As a result, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is developing a FEIS to evaluate alternatives for a regulatory program to protect lobster and enhance enforcement of that program. These alternatives include implementation of importation restrictions addressing minimum size limits, egg-bearing spiny lobsters, and tail meat without exoskeleton in tact.

Additional copies of the FEIS may be obtained from the Responsible Program Official identified below. The document is also accessible electronically from the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SpinyLobsterAmendment.htm>.

Written comments should be submitted through mail, facsimile (fax), or e-mail to the Responsible Program Official identified below. Written comments submitted during the agency's 30-day public comment period must be received by November 24, 2008. When submitting fax or e-mail comments, include the following document identifier in the comment subject line: 0648-AV61.

Responsible Program Official: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
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Sincerely,

Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.  
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

