

# Public Notice

Department of Defense Department of the Navy Notice of Availability for the Finding of No Significant Impact for the Program Definition and Risk Reduction Phase for the Advanced Deployable System (ADS) testing off the West Coast, USA.

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Part 1500-1508) implementing the procedural provisions of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Department of the Navy gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the proposed ADS testing off the West Coast, USA.

The proposed action will evaluate the capability and performance of ADS by conducting four ocean tests in Southern California, the area between Point Conception and the Mexican border. The tests include: exercising shipboard handling systems, towing a Towed Deployment Vehicle (TDV) from a support vessel, deploying cables and passive hydrophone arrays to the sea floor, conducting acoustic performance tests, and recovering all equipment. In addition, the tests will include establishing a shore station at MCB Camp Pendleton to serve as a temporary data processing station.

Although ADS is a passive system and would not use active acoustics, it is necessary for testing purposes to produce sounds in the water, similar to those produced by typical ships, to evaluate ADS capabilities. The key issue identified during the preparation of the EA was the potential for acoustic impacts on fish and marine mammals. However, the analysis of potential acoustic impacts demonstrated that significant impacts on fish and marine mammals would not occur as a result of implementation of the proposed ADS ocean tests. Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the ADS test program to minimize any potential for listed threatened or endangered species, critical habitat, wetlands, or archeological or historic resources.

Impacts to air quality would not be significant since emissions subject to Clean Air Act Conformity Rule review were found to be below de minimis levels for all criteria pollutants. The Navy finds that the proposed action will not significantly impact the environment.

A copy of the EA or the Finding of No Significant Impact may be obtained from: Richard Williamson, Office of Congressional & Public Affairs, Space & Naval Warfare Systems Command, San Diego, California 92110-3127 USA; telephone (619) 524-3432.