**Proposed Action**

The Department of the Navy (DON) has analyzed the proposed areas where the majority of Atlantic Fleet active sonar training would be conducted along the East Coast and within the Gulf of Mexico. Training exercises include Independent Unit Level Training, Coordinated Unit Level Training, and Strike Group Training exercises. During these events, surface ships, submarines, and aircraft utilize a number of active and passive sonar systems, as well as other training devices for Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW), Mine Warfare (MIW), and related active sonar training. The specific proposed locations for sonar use were based on individual training and maintenance objectives that satisfy the selection criteria, as well as the quantitative-based environmental analysis performed in this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS).

**The Purpose**

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide active sonar training for U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet ship, submarine, and aircraft crews, and to conduct research, test, development, and evaluation (RDT&E) activities to support the requirements of the Fleet Readiness Training Plan (FRTP) and stay proficient in ASW and MIW skills.

**The Need**

The DON’s need for the proposed action is derived from the legal mandate for such training, Section 5062 of Title 10 of the United States Code (U.S.C.). This mandate directs the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) to organize, train, and equip all Naval forces for combat. The CNO fulfills this direction by conducting training activities during a pre-deployment training cycle that occurs prior to deployment for actual operations. At the beginning of this cycle, basic combat skills are learned and practiced during basic-level or unit-level training. Basic skills are then refined at the intermediate and advanced levels as progressively more difficult, complex, and larger-scale exercises are conducted at an increasing tempo referred to as integrated training. By the conclusion of the pre-deployment training, the warfighter has learned the skills necessary to function as part of a coordinated fighting force in a hostile environment and has developed the capacity to accomplish multiple missions. This training ensures that
U.S. Naval forces meet the mission and readiness mandate established in Title 10 of the U.S.C.