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AMERICAN OCEANS CAMPAIGN

VIA TELEFAX: (301) 713-2303

December 12, 2000

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Public Reference Facility (OFAS3)
1305 East West Highway (SSMC4), Room 8627
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910**Re: Freedom of Information Act Request for the National Marine
Fisheries Service, and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center**

Dear Freedom of Information Act Officer:

This is a request for records under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552. The scope of this request is for records pertaining to raw observer catch and bycatch data from the 2000 Experimental Scallop Fishery in the New England Georges Bank groundfish closed areas, as authorized by Framework Adjustments 12-13 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan, which were prepared by the New England Fishery Management Council and approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Specifically, this request covers the following records (whether in written, computerized, or other format) concerning observer data in the 2000 Experimental Scallop Fishery:

1. All observer data obtained from the 2000 Experimental Scallop Fishery in Closed Area II. Please include copies of all observer-prepared reports for all observed scallop vessel trips in the groundfish closed areas during the 2000 scallop fishery. Please include raw data reports of all observed scallop fishing trips, including all observer summaries of observed catch and bycatch.

American Oceans Campaign (AOC) is a non-profit environmental organization recognized under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. AOC is not seeking the above-requested records for any commercial purpose, and AOC will not derive income from those records. Rather, the records will be used in furtherance of AOC's mission, which is to protect marine environments.

The records received in response to this request will be reviewed by AOC and will be shared with other regional and national non-profit environmental organizations. AOC plans to disseminate this information to the public via its newsletters and its internet website to inform citizens about the selectivity of fishing gears used in the Atlantic sea scallop fishery to harvest scallops, and amounts and types of bycatch occurring in scallop dredges. Accordingly, the present request qualifies for a waiver of costs under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A) and 40 C.F.R.

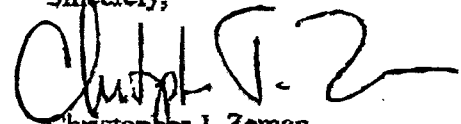
A non-profit organization
dedicated to protecting
the vitality of the nation's
oceanic and coastal areas.

New England Field Office: 579 Hamilton Pl., River Vale, NJ 07675 Tel: (201) 263-9756 Fax: (201) 263-9758

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I look forward to your response within twenty days, as required by the Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). Please contact Chris Zeman at (201) 263-9756 if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Zeman
Fisheries Program Counsel
American Oceans Campaign

cc: Daryl Christensen, Chief, Fisheries Sampling Branch, NEFSC