

application would be appropriate (see ADDRESSES). The holding of such hearing is at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA. All statements and opinions contained in these application summaries are those of the applicant and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS.

Dated: May 30, 1997.

Nancy Chu,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 052397E]

Marine Mammals

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Issuance of scientific research permit no. 662-1345.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Ms. Dena Matkin, Box 22, Gustavus, Alaska 99826, has been issued a permit to "take" by harassment, humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) for purposes of scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289); and

Regional Administrator, Alaska Regional Office, NMFS, NOAA, 709 West 9th Street, Federal Building, Juneau, Alaska 99802 (907-586-7221).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 20, 1997, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 13368) that the above-named applicant had submitted a request for a scientific research permit to take (inadvertently harass) up to 400 killer whales and up to 100 humpback whales for purposes of scientific research, over a 5-year period. The purpose of the research is to continue long-term, year-round photo-identification work in Southeastern Alaska to define the population size, structure and range of killer whales, and to obtain identification of photographs of humpback whales opportunistically

in conjunction with the killer whale research. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR Part 216), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the Regulations Governing the Taking, Importing, and Exporting of Endangered Fish and Wildlife (50 CFR part 222).

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit: (1) Was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species which is the subject of this permit; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: May 30, 1997.

Ann D. Terbush,

Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 97-14922 Filed 6-6-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Public Forum on Certificate Authorities and Digital Signatures: Enhancing Global Electronic Commerce

AGENCY: Technology Administration, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public forum and request for public comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce requests public comments on various aspects of the public key infrastructure related to certificate authorities and digital signatures. This request for public comment will enable the Department, and other Executive Branch agencies, to benefit from the expertise and views of the private sector, states, localities, non-profits, industry associations and other national and international entities. Specific questions that the Department seeks public comments on are listed in "Supplementary Information". A "Public Forum on Certificate Authorities and Digital Signatures: Enhancing Global Electronic Commerce" is being sponsored by the Department on this topic. The comments received by the Department will aid in effectively supporting Administration initiatives on electronic commerce issues.

DATES: The "Public Forum on Certificate Authorities and Digital Signatures: Enhancing Global Electronic

Commerce" will be held on July 24, 1997, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Advanced registration for the "Public Forum" is due by July 16, 1997.

Written comments are due by July 16, 1997.

Requests to participate as a panelist in the "Public Forum" are due by July 2, 1997.

ADDRESSES: The "Public Forum on Certificate Authorities and Digital Signatures: Enhancing Global Electronic Commerce" will take place at the Green Auditorium, Administration Building, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Written comments should be sent to: Director, Information Technology Laboratory, ATTN: "Public Forum on Certificate Authorities and Digital Signatures", Technology Building, Room A231, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD 20899.

Electronic comments may be sent to ECFORUM@NIST.GOV. Electronic comments should be in ASCII, MS word or WordPerfect formats. No comments will be accepted by voice phone or by fax.

PUBLIC INFORMATION: The Department, based on comments received and expressions of interest, will organize the Public Forum as a series of panels, with short presentations and then a period for questions from the audience. Not all issues included in this notice may be covered in the public forum, and the Department may organize the program along lines different than the questions are presented. Members of the public who are interested in serving on a panel are asked to contact the individual listed in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** below. Due to time and physical constraints, and in order to develop an effective program, not all requests can be honored.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Edward Roback, Information Technology Laboratory, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Building 820, Room 426, Gaithersburg, MD 20899-0001. (301) 975-3696.

For planning purposes, advanced registration is requested by July 16, 1997. To register, please fax your name, postal address, telephone and e-mail address to: 301-948-1233, ATTN: "July 24 Public Forum". Space permitting, registration will also be available at the door. The July 24th meeting is open to the public. There is no registration fee for the Public Forum.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The "Public Forum" on Certificate Authorities and Digital Signatures:

Enhancing Global Electronic Commerce" will be held on July 24, 1997 at the Green Auditorium, Administration Building, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD.

Copies of written submissions received by July 16, 1997, will be made available at the Public Forum.

Issues for Public Comment and Themes of the Public Forum

The emergence of a public key infrastructure, and the demands of global electronic commerce, have generated significant private sector and governmental efforts to develop a reliable system of certificate authorities that enable use of trustworthy digital signatures.

The Department of Commerce, and other Executive Branch agencies, seek public comment on and are planning a Public Forum that encompasses the following issues. By seeking comment from the varied parties and interests, reflecting the many initiatives that are underway, the Executive Branch will be better able to assess emerging initiatives on digital signatures and certificate authorities; ensure that the federal government's PKI activities take advantage of the latest developments and directions in the private sector; and aid federal government officials and industry representatives participating in domestic and international fora on these issues.

1. *State government initiatives through "digital signature laws."* Some two dozen states have passed some form of "digital signature laws" in the last two years. The Department encourages comments from relevant state government agencies on the experiences and issues that have arisen during the process of implementing these laws, including the status of any registration of certificate authorities. Comments that reflect the systematic aspects of digital signature laws are especially encouraged. Comments are also encouraged by users and stakeholders in the systems that result from passage of these "digital signature laws."

2. *The evolving legal framework of certificate authorities and digital signatures.* A number of private sector efforts are underway to examine and recommend changes to the legal and regulatory framework that could contribute to a reliable system of certificate authorities. The Department notes the efforts, among others, of the American Bar Association ("Digital Signature Guidelines") and the National Commission on Uniform State Laws. The Department encourages comments

from all private sector efforts which are undertaking efforts in this area.

3. *The technology and business challenges of certificate authorities and digital signatures.* In response to user demands, an industry of certificate authorities is emerging. The Department seeks comments from those entities that are offering services and technologies that relate to issuing certificates and digital signatures.

4. *User requirements and expectations.* A multitude of sectors can be expected to utilize a reliable system of certificate authorities and digital signatures. The Department seeks comments from any and all sectors that are developing performance requirements and user expectations in this area. Comments are encouraged from non-profits and governmental entities, as well as for-profit enterprises.

5. *An international perspective.* A number of countries and international fora are examining the issues of a reliable system of certificate authorities and use of digital signatures. The Department notes the activities of UNCITRAL, the OECD, as well as recent developments in Germany, Japan, the European Union, etc. The Department invites comments from international representatives on the issues outlined in this notice and participation in the Public Forum.

Comments received in response to this notice will be made part of the public record and will be available for inspection and copying in the Central Reference and Records Inspection Facility, Room 6020, Herbert C. Hoover Building, 14th Street between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, NW, Washington, DC 20230. The Department intends to publish the proceedings of the Public Forum, and all public comments, as soon as possible after the July 24th meeting.

Dated: June 3, 1997.

Mary L. Good,

Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology.

[FR Doc. 97-14991 Filed 6-6-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Technology Administration

Notice of Public Meeting on the Proposed Experimental Program To Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT)

AGENCY: Technology Administration, Department of Commerce.

SUMMARY: The Technology Administration will hold an open meeting on June 27, 1997 to solicit input

on the proposed Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT) from representatives of state and local government, universities, and the private- and non-profit sectors, who are involved with technology development, diffusion, commercialization, and using technology to promote economic growth. The purpose of the meeting is to determine what activities are currently being conducted in the states to foster technology-based economic growth and how a new competitive, cost-shared federal grant program with the mission of fostering the development of indigenous technology assets in states that are traditionally under represented in Federal R&D funding could be structured. The following states would currently be eligible to participate in the EPSCoT: Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming, as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday, June 27, 1997 from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Crown Plaza, New Orleans, Louisiana. Individuals wishing to attend the meeting should contact Maureen Wood, Office of the Under Secretary for Technology, at (202) 482-1091 by close of business June 25, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anita Balachandra, Technology Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce at (202) 482-1320.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Technology Administration (TA) is proposing a new, competitive, matching grant program called the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT) to foster the development of indigenous technology assets in states that traditionally have been under represented in the distribution of Federal R&D expenditures.

Technology is the engine of economic growth and, as such, its development, deployment, and diffusion are critical to U.S. competitiveness. Although it is often said that nations do not compete, companies do, it is apparent that sub-national units—regions within states and clusters of states—do compete, not simply with one another, but also internationally. This is because in a global economy, capital, labor, and technology are increasingly mobile and they are attracted to regions with the most promising opportunities. To this