



**DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (PEIS) FOR SURVEYING AND MAPPING PROJECTS IN U.S. WATERS FOR COASTAL AND MARINE DATA ACQUISITION**

# OVERVIEW



The National Ocean Service (NOS) is the nation's leading authority on hydrography, shoreline mapping, and nautical charts. NOS has prepared a Draft PEIS to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with NOS's recurring data collection projects throughout U.S. coastal and marine waters to characterize submerged features (habitat, bathymetry, marine debris). The Proposed Action analyzed in the Draft PEIS is to continue NOS's data collection projects.

**Purpose and Need:** The purpose of the Proposed Action is to gather accurate and timely data on the marine and coastal environment. The need for the Proposed Action is to ensure safety at sea, economic well-being, and the efficient stewardship of public trust resources.

**Timespan of the Proposed Action:** 6 years

**Action Area:** U.S. rivers, states' offshore waters, the U.S. territorial sea, the contiguous zone; the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, and coastal and riparian lands.



## NOS Surveying and Mapping Activities

NOS surveying and mapping activities include the use of a variety of equipment and technologies to gather accurate and timely data on the nature and condition of the marine and coastal environment. NOS would continue to conduct projects such as hydrographic surveys for nautical charts, underwater obstruction detection, marine debris surveys, and benthic (sea floor) habitat characteristic surveys.

### Alternative A (No Action)

Conduct Surveys and Mapping for Coastal and Marine Data Collection with Current Technology and Methods at Current Funding Levels

### Alternative B (NOS Preferred Alternative)

Conduct Surveys and Mapping for Coastal and Marine Data Collection with Equipment Upgrades, Improved Hydroacoustic Devices, and New Tide Stations

### Alternative C

Upgrades and Improvements with Greater Funding Support

**Document History:** The [Notice of Intent \(NOI\) to prepare a programmatic environmental assessment \(PEA\)](#) was published in December of 2016. During drafting, NOS decided that the scope and complexity of the mapping program warranted a PEIS.

**Resources Analyzed:** Habitats, Marine Mammals, Sea Turtles, Fish, Aquatic Macroinvertebrates, Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), Birds, Cultural and Historic Resources, Socioeconomic Resources, and Environmental Justice.

**Acoustic Modeling:** NOS performed acoustic modeling to characterize the potential impacts from the active underwater acoustic sources used in NOS projects including single and multibeam echo sounders, side scan sonars, Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers (ADCP), and acoustic communication systems. The results of the modeling are presented in the Draft PEIS primarily in Section 3.5.2 and Appendix C.