UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

January 13, 2014

David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources
NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701

Re: DWH-ERP-Request for section 7 Endangered Species Act Informal Consultation for *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill Phase III Early Restoration Plan artificial reef projects (a total of 4) in Texas: *Expansion of the Corpus Christi Artificial Reef (MU-775) in Texas State Waters of the Gulf of Mexico (Corpus Reef Project), Expansion of the George Vancouver (Liberty Ship) Artificial Reef (BA-336) in Texas State Waters of the Gulf of Mexico (Freeport Reef Project), Creation of Ship Artificial Reef (HI-A-424) in the Gulf of Mexico off Texas (Ship Reef Project), and Creation of the Matagorda Artificial Reef (BA-439) in Texas State Waters of the Gulf of Mexico (Matagorda Reef Project)*

Dear David,

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center requests informal consultation with your office, under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), for impacts from four artificial reef projects. These projects have the potential to affect the following federally listed species administered by NOAA Fisheries:

Sea Turtles (Green-T, Hawksbill-E, Leatherback-E, Loggerhead-T, Kemp's Ridley-E)

The NOAA Restoration Center, a Lead Federal Agency, is requesting consultation on behalf of the Natural Resource Trustees for *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill. Enclosed, please find Biological Assessments and NMFS ESA Checklists for these Phase III Early Restoration Projects

For further questions about these projects, please contact Jamie Schubert of our staff at 409-621-1248.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

for Leslie Craig

Supervisor, Southeast Region, NOAA Restoration Center
NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation

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