

15 MS. HARDEN: Thanks for taking comments.

16 So the way Earthjustice describes the sound of
17 sonar is they describe it as an air horn blasted directly
18 in your ear and then turning the volume up twice as loud,
19 and that's what they're saying how sonar could sound to
20 endangered marine animals off the northwest U.S. coast.
21 And as you know, Earthjustice is suing to move the Navy
22 actions there to less sensitive areas.

23 But for actions that are proposed in this EIS,
24 the Navy is not as concerned about sonar as citizens are.
25 The Navy says, "International Council for Exploration of
1 the Sea noted, taken in the context of marine mammal
2 populations in general, sonar is not a major threat or
3 significant portion of the overall ocean noise." But the
4 Navy doesn't report that the Council also says, "The full
5 effects of sonar on cetaceans are not well known.
6 Behavioral alteration is more important than the direct
7 effect of the sound on hearing mechanisms. It is unknown
8 how many animals that are affected further out to sea can
9 survive and not strand. Little is known of the sublethal
10 effects of sonar on beaked whales or other cetacean
11 species."

12 Some people say marine animals who are trying to
13 avoid sonar may get the bends. The Woods Hole
14 Oceanographic Institute says blood and tissues of some
15 deceased beaked whales stranded near naval sonar exercises
16 are riddled with bubbles, and human divers, when they get
17 bubbles-induced decompression sickness, that's also known
18 as the bends.

19 The Navy doesn't seem concerned. They say
20 recent modeling suggests that even unrealistically rapid
21 rates of ascent from a normal dive are unlikely to result

22 in supersaturation that would form bubbles in beaked
23 whales. But the Navy didn't report that the scientists
24 they cited also said modeling indicates repetitive shallow
25 dives, maybe as a consequence of trying to avoid sonar, can
1 indeed pose a risk for the decompression sickness.

2 The current EIS finds 16 times as many marine
3 mammals might be harmed by Navy actions compared to an
4 estimate from the EIS just a few years ago. The earlier
5 EIS didn't consider in-port sonar testing or actions in
6 waters between Hawaii and California, and research and
7 computer modeling was less accurate. So I wonder how much
8 harm we'll discover in the next few years.

9 And when will old Navy sites and other military
10 sites ever be cleaned up? A General Accounting Office
11 report found that military policies don't specify when to
12 conduct public health assessments beyond the initial
13 assessment, and officials did not know what actions, if
14 any, installations have taken on about 80 percent of
15 recommendations. So the Navy may not be concerned about a
16 lot of things, but citizens are.