

Chapter 6: Comments on the Draft EIS

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The Draft EIS was circulated to the public on February 8, 2001, and the Notice of Availability was published on February 16, 2001 (F.R. 66, no. 33). Comments were received from the following entities:

United States Department of State
National Science Foundation
International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO)
IAATO Representative
Zegrahm Expeditions
Oceanites, Inc.
The Antarctica Project (TAP)
Marine Expeditions

The two government entities have foreign policy and scientific interests and expertise in matters related to Antarctica including the National Science Foundation's responsibility for environmental impact assessment of governmental activities in Antarctica. IAATO's comments were submitted on behalf of eleven U.S. member companies and two non-member companies.¹ IAATO's Representative also offered comment, and IAATO-member, Zegrahm Expeditions provided separate comment. The Antarctica Project's comments were offered on behalf of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (TAP/ASOC).² Marine Expeditions is a Canadian-based Antarctic tour operator.³

As part of the rule-making process, the Office of Management and Budget reviewed the Draft EIS and discussed its comments with EPA.

The comment letters are reproduced in Appendix 28. Comments are bracketed and EPA's response to each comment is annotated to the comment.

EPA assessed the comments both individually and collectively. As a result, certain factual corrections were made in the Final EIS. EPA did not receive any new information that would lead

¹ IAATO is the principle representative of the Antarctic tour industry. The U.S. member companies represented by IAATO's letter are: Abercrombie and Kent/Explorer Shipping, Lindblad Expeditions (formerly Special Expeditions), Mountain Travel•Sobek, Clipper Cruise Line/New World Ship Management Company LLC, Quark Expeditions, Society Expeditions, Zegrahm Expeditions, Inc., Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, LifeLong Learning and Radisson Seven Seas Cruises. The two non-members are: Orient Lines and Holland America Line Westours, Inc. (Landau 2001).

² TAP/ASOC's listed representation includes: TAP Director, TAP Counsel, ASOC Senior Advisor, Director, Government Relations - World Wildlife Fund, and Director, International Program - Sierra Club.

³ Marine Expeditions filed for bankruptcy in 2001; its future status as an Antarctic tour operator is unknown.

the Agency to modify the alternatives including the proposed action or to develop and evaluate alternatives not previously given serious consideration. EPA believes its responses to comments, as annotated to the copies of the comment letters in Appendix 28, offer explanation as to why the comments do not warrant further agency response.

Appendix 29 provides a summary of major changes made between the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements.