



OFFICE OF ADVOCACY *FACTSHEET*

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Advocacy Pushes for Better Analysis of Small Business Impact of Alaska Groundfish

On August 1, 2005, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy (Advocacy) filed comments with the Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on proposed regulations to implement Amendment 79 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area. A copy of Advocacy's comments can be found at: www.sba.gov/advo/laws/comments.

- Amendment 79 reduces bycatch (fish that are not the intended target) and improves utilization of groundfish harvested by catcher/processor trawl vessels. It implements an annual groundfish retention standard as well as monitoring and enforcement measures for trawl catcher/processors greater than 125 feet.
- Members of the industry are concerned about the size standard that NMFS used to define a small business in its regulatory flexibility analysis. In its Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA), NMFS uses a \$3.5 million size standard to define catcher/processor vessels. Advocacy believes that the vessels should be classified as "floating factory ships." The size standard for businesses in that industry is 500 or fewer employees. Advocacy encouraged NMFS to prepare an IRFA using the correct size standard classification and to consider alternatives that will not be as burdensome to the industry.
- The industry is also concerned that certain aspects of the proposed rule were not recommended or discussed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Specifically, the new monitoring and enforcement measures include a ban on mixing hauls, a new observer schedule, and the installation of a NMFS approved scale and a specified single observer location. The industry asserts that these new measures will require costly reworking of the factory layouts and a reduction in production. Advocacy encouraged NMFS to perform an economic analysis of the new measures.

For more information, visit Advocacy's webpage at www.sba.gov/advo or contact Jennifer Smith at 202-205-6943.