

(3) *Conference with parties on motion to compel.* Within 5 business days after the filing of a reply to a motion to compel in a rate case to be considered under the stand-alone cost methodology, Board staff may convene a conference with the parties to discuss the dispute, attempt to narrow the issues, and gather any further information needed to render a ruling.

(4) *Ruling on motion to compel in stand-alone cost rate cases.* Within 5 business days after a conference with the parties convened pursuant to paragraph (a)(3) of this section, the Secretary will issue a summary ruling on the motion to compel discovery in a stand-alone cost rate case. If no conference is convened, the Secretary will issue this summary ruling within 10 business days after the filing of the reply to the motion to compel. Appeals of a Secretary's ruling will proceed under 49 CFR 1115.9, and the Board will attempt to rule on such appeals within 20 days after the filing of the reply to the appeal.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 031125292-4061-02; I.D. 092404A]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Catching Pacific Cod for Processing by the Inshore Component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Modification of a closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is opening directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to fully use the 2004 B season total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod specified for vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area.

DATES: Effective 1200 hrs, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 28, 2004, through 2400 hrs, A.l.t., December 31, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

NMFS closed the directed fishery for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA under § 679.20(d)(1)(iii) on September 10, 2004 (69 FR 55361, September 14, 2004).

NMFS has determined that approximately 730 mt of Pacific cod remain in the 2004 B season directed fishing allowance. Therefore, in accordance with §§ 679.25(a)(2)(i)(C) and (a)(2)(iii)(D), and to fully utilize the 2004 B season TAC of Pacific cod specified for vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore

component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA, NMFS is terminating the previous closure and is reopening directed fishing for Pacific cod by vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., September 28, 2004.

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, (AA), finds good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) as such a requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the opening of the fishery under the Pacific cod 2004 B season TAC specified for vessels catching Pacific cod for processing by the inshore component in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA.

The AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

This action is required by §§ 679.20 and 679.25 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: September 24, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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