

Director, Office of Marine Insurance had discussions with the incoming chairman of the IUA and the chairman indicated that the new organization will not have the same eligibility criteria as the ILU or any internal oversight activities. In view of this, MARAD is seeking comments concerning how to deal with existing ILU member companies after the merger. Will it be necessary to qualify ILU member companies on an individual "ad hoc" basis after the merger is implemented? MARAD has a number of questions it would like to receive comment on:

(1) Should companies who were in the ILU and approved to write insurance on MARAD program vessels maintain their eligibility for some period, say a year after merger, while they are reviewed on an individual basis?

(2) Should ILU member companies (post merger) be subject to the same requirements of "Other Foreign Underwriters" under section 249.5(c) Eligibility criteria?

(3) If an ILU member company has been previously approved under 249.5(c), in the French or Scandinavian market for example, should that eligibility be governing?

(4) Should ILU member companies appearing on the Quarterly Listing of Alien Insurers compiled by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners be eligible for MARAD underwriting provided they remain in good standing and remain on this list?

(5) If an ILU member company is the subsidiary or affiliate of a company that is approved under Section 249.5(c), should it have the benefit of that approval if a satisfactory parent company or similar guarantee is provided?

(6) Any other aspect of this issue.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Dated: September 1, 1998.

Joel C. Richard,

Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 082098G]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce

ACTION: Notice of public meetings; public hearing.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling several public meetings of its oversight committees and advisory panels in September, 1998 to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from these groups will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meetings will be held on September 9 and September 17, 1998.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held in Gloucester and Saugus, MA. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific locations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; (781) 231-0422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Meeting Dates and Agendas

Wednesday, September 9, 1998, 9:00 a.m.—Joint Habitat Committee and Advisory Panel Meeting

Location: New England Fishery Management Council Office conference room; 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1036; telephone: (781) 231-0422.

Review and approval of the final Essential Fish Habitat Amendment document and environmental assessment prior to final consideration by the Council.

Thursday, September 17, 1998, 9:30 a.m.—Groundfish Committee Meeting

Location: The Tavern on the Harbor, 30 Western Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930; telephone: (978) 283-4200.

Review of draft regulatory language for Amendment 9 to the Northeast Multispecies Fisheries Management Plan and development of guidance to the Council's Multispecies Monitoring Committee (MSMC). That group evaluates the effectiveness of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan and recommends management options for Gulf of Maine cod and other species as part of an annual review and plan adjustment process. Further regulation of recreational catches, modification or addition of closed areas, or a bycatch-only designation for Gulf of Maine cod may be among the options considered by the MSMC.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery

Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: August 31, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 971208298-8055-02; I.D. 082798B]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Proposed reallocation; request for comments.

SUMMARY: Based on currently available information, NMFS has determined that the trawl catcher/processor sector will not be able to harvest its entire share of the Pacific cod total allowable catch (TAC) in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) and it proposes to make the projected unused amount of the trawl catcher/processor share of the Pacific cod TAC available to the trawl catcher vessel sector. NMFS also is proposing to reallocate the projected unused amount of Pacific cod from trawl catcher/processors to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear in the BSAI. NMFS invites public comments, particularly from the trawl catcher vessel sector, on NMFS's determination that the trawl catcher/processor sector will not be able to harvest its share of Pacific cod and NMFS's proposal to reallocate the unused amount of Pacific cod from the trawl catcher/processor sector to hook-and-line and pot gear. The proposed action is necessary to

allow the 1998 TAC of Pacific cod to be harvested.

DATES: Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., Alaska local time, September 18, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be sent to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Alaska Region, NMFS, 709 West 9th, Room 453, Juneau, AK 99801 or P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, Attention: Lori Gravel.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew N. Smoker, 907-586-7210.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (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.

In accordance with § 679.20(c)(3)(iii), the Final 1998 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish for the BSAI (63 FR 12689, March 16, 1998) established the amount of the 1998 Pacific cod TAC as 194,250 metric tons (mt). Pursuant to 679.20(a)(7)(i)(A), 3,885 mt was allocated to vessels using jig gear, 99,068 mt to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear, and 91,298 mt to vessels using trawl gear. The share of the Pacific cod TAC allocated to trawl gear was further allocated 50 percent to catcher vessels and 50 percent to catcher/processor vessels (§ 679.20(a)(7)(i)(B)).

As of August 1, 1998, the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that 16,615 mt remain in the trawl catcher/processor vessel share and projects that the trawl catcher/processor sector will not harvest 7,000 mt of that share during the remainder of 1998.

Therefore, pursuant to § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(A), NMFS proposes to make the projected unused amount of the trawl catcher/processor share of Pacific cod available to the trawl catcher vessel sector. In accordance with § 679.20(a)(7)(ii)(B), NMFS also is

proposing to reallocate the projected unused amount (7,000 mt) of Pacific cod from trawl catcher/processors to vessels using hook-and-line or pot gear.

NMFS invites public comments, particularly from the trawl catcher vessel sector, on NMFS's determination that the trawl catcher/processor sector will not be able to harvest its share of the Pacific cod TAC, on whether the catcher vessel sector would be able to harvest the projected unused catcher/processor share, and on NMFS's proposal to reallocate the unused amount of Pacific cod from the trawl catcher/processor sector to hook-and-line and pot gear.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 679.20 and is exempt from OMB review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: August 27, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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