



United States Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
One Blackburn Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

April 5, 2001

Re: Multispecies Limited-Access Permit Buyback

Dear Permit Holder:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) seeks your input in the development of a program to compensate holders of multispecies limited-access permits in exchange for the voluntary surrender of their permits.

The U.S. Congress has appropriated \$10.0 million intended to support a *voluntary* fishing capacity reduction program (FCRP) in the Northeast multispecies fishery that permanently removes multispecies limited access fishing permits from the fishery. NMFS is considering a plan for distributing funds to permit holders in exchange for their permit forfeiture and is requesting comments on the most appropriate and cost-effective means to accomplish the program's intended goal. This draft program was announced in the Federal Register (3 Apr 2001, 66 FR 17668) and your comments are requested through 25 May 2001.

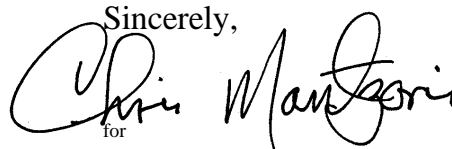
Previous buyback programs sought to remove vessels and all their permits from participation in the fishery. This FCRP is focused only on multispecies limited access permits and will not pay for removing vessels from the industry. Program participants may retain their vessels and other permits and may continue working in other fisheries.

Unlike previous buyback programs, this FCRP seeks to include not only current participants in the multispecies fishery, but permit holders who are not active in the multispecies fishery (including Confirmation of Permit History Holders). Because this FCRP differs from previous buybacks in terms of its goals and its likely participants, a new bid and ranking process must be developed. NMFS proposes that vessel baselines and other operational characteristics be considered as factors in the ranking of bids, but is seeking input from the public and will consider public comments in the development of every aspect of the final program.

Please note, this letter is not a solicitation for bids. You will receive another letter inviting you to participate in the program once this FCRP is finalized.



Nine meetings have been scheduled throughout the Northeast to discuss this FCRP and to gain input from the public on its implementation. Details of the meetings are printed on the reverse of this page. You can view the Federal Register notice regarding this program by visiting the website at <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/nero.html> and clicking on the "What's New" icon, or you can contact Jack Terrill, (978) 281-9136, Jack.Terrill@noaa.gov, or Daniel Morris, (978) 281-9237, Daniel.Morris@noaa.gov, for more information. Written comments may be sent to NMFS, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298, Attn: D. Morris or faxed to 978-281-9301. NMFS cannot accept email comments.

Sincerely,  
  
for  
Patricia A. Kurkul  
Regional Administrator

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Northeast Multispecies Fishing Capacity Reduction Program  
Public Information Meetings

To gain information from the public on how best to implement this FCRP, NMFS is planning the following public meetings, which will begin at 7:00 pm:

1. **May 8, 2001** - Gloucester, MA - National Marine Fisheries Service, 1 Blackburn Drive, 978-281-9136
2. **May 9, 2001** - Portland, ME - Holiday Inn By the Bay (Lincoln Room), 88 Spring Street, 207-775-2311
3. **May 10, 2001** - Plymouth, MA - John Carver Inn, 25 Summer Street, 508-746-7100
4. **May 10, 2001** - Ellsworth, ME - White Birches Motel, U.S. Route 1, 207-667-3621
5. **May 15, 2001** - Portsmouth, NH - Yokens Conference Center and Comfort Inn, Rte. 1, 603-433-3338
6. **May 15, 2001** - Riverhead, NY - Ramada East End (Garden Room), 1830 Route 25, 631-369-2200
7. **May 16, 2001** - New Bedford, MA - New Bedford Inn, 500 Hathaway Road, 508-997-1231
8. **May 17, 2001** - Toms River, NJ - Holiday Inn (Heritage I Room), 290 Route 37E, 732-244-4000
9. **May 17, 2001** - Narragansett, RI - URI Coastal Institute, Graduate School of Oceanography (Corliss Auditorium), South Ferry Road, 401-874-6110