



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115
www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/index.html



PUBLIC NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2016

PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

Trawl Catch Share Program:

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement; Request for Comments Public comment open through April 4, 2016

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces their intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze the impacts on the human (biological, physical, social, and economic) environment of gear changes in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery's Trawl Catch Share Program. NMFS provides this notice to: (1) advise the public and other agencies of its plans to analyze effects related to the action, and (2) obtain suggestions and information that may be useful to the scope of issues and the full range of alternatives to include in the EIS. The Federal Register notice provides more detail on the proposed action and alternatives (81 FR 11189, March 3, 2016).

Public comments must be received **by 5p.m. Pacific Standard Time on April 4, 2016**. You may submit comments on issues and alternatives by any of the following methods:

- **Email:** groundfish.gearEIS@noaa.gov
- **Mail:** Submit written comments to William W. Stelle, Jr., Regional Administrator, West Coast Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115-0070; Attn: Jamie Goen.
- **Instructions:** Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS.

NMFS is inviting comments on the proposed alternatives, the potential impacts of these alternatives, and further details of how fishermen are likely to operate under these alternatives. For example, NMFS invites comments on the potential impacts of the alternatives given changes being considered by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) on electronic monitoring, essential fish habitat, and rockfish conservation areas. Comments should be as specific as possible.

Public scoping will be conducted through the notice of intent to prepare an EIS by the public comments received. In addition, the Council's March 8 -14, 2016, meeting in Sacramento, California is considered a public scoping meeting (DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, CA 95815). Other future opportunities for public involvement may arise and will be posted in the Council Briefing Book (on the Council's website (<http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/briefing-books/>) prior to the meeting.