

discuss the role the Board will fill and set the framework for future meetings of the Board. On September 26, 1997, the agenda for this first meeting of the Board will include an overview of MEP to include manufacturing extension centers' current activities, impacts of services provided and future goals of centers.

DATES: The meeting will convene on September 26, 1997 at 9:00 am and will adjourn at 3:00 pm.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in Building 301, Room C-145 (seating capacity 45, includes 15 participants), at NIST, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: MEP services to smaller manufacturers address the needs of the national market as well as the unique needs of each company. Since MEP is committed to providing this type of individualized service through its centers, the program requires the perspective of locally-based experts to be incorporated into its national plans. The MEP National Advisory Board was set up at the direction of the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to maintain MEP's focus on local and market based needs. The NEP National Advisory Board was approved on October 24, 1996, in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. app.2., to provide advice on MEP programs, plans, and policies; assess soundness of MEP plans and strategies; assess current performance against MEP program plans, and function in an advisory capacity. The Board will meet three times a year and reports to the Director of NIST. This will be the first meeting of the members.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Linda Acierto, Assistant to the Director for Policy, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD 20899, telephone number (301) 975-5033.

Dated: August 21, 1997.

Elaine Buntin-Mines,

Director, Program Office.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 082597A]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Fisheries; Notice That Vendor Will Provide 1998 Cage Tags

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

ACTION: Notice of vendor to provide 1998 cage tags.

SUMMARY: NMFS informs surf clam and ocean quahog allocation owners that they will be required to purchase their 1998 cage tags from a vendor.

ADDRESSES: Written inquiries may be sent to Mr. Richard Pearson at: National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-3799.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard A. Pearson, Fishery Policy Analyst, 508-281-9279.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Federal Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Fisheries regulations at 50 CFR 648.75(b) authorize the Regional Administrator of the Northeast Region to specify in the **Federal Register** a vendor from whom cage tags, required under the management plan, shall be purchased. Implementation of this program will make the surf clam/ocean quahog tag program consistent with other regional tag programs, and set the stage for future tag programs that may be considered. Notice is hereby given that National Band and Tag Company of Newport, KY, is the authorized vendor of cage tags required for the 1998 Federal surf clam and ocean quahog fisheries. Detailed instructions for purchasing these cage tags will be provided in a letter to allocation owners within the next several weeks.

Dated: August 26, 1997.

Bruce Morehead,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 080897A]

Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Seismic Retrofit of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, San Francisco Bay, CA

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

ACTION: Notice of receipt of application and proposed authorization for a small take exemption; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) for an authorization to take small numbers of Pacific harbor seals and possibly California sea lions by harassment incidental to seismic retrofit construction of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, San Francisco Bay, CA (the Bridge). Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to authorize CALTRANS to incidentally take, by harassment, small numbers of marine mammals in the above mentioned area for a 1-year period beginning in December 1997.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than October 3, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to Michael Payne, Chief, Marine Mammal Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225. A copy of the application, a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and a list of references cited in this document may be obtained by writing to this address or by telephoning one of the contacts listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kenneth R. Hollingshead, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713-2055, or Irma Lagomarsino, Southwest Regional Office, NMFS, (310) 980-4016.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 101(a)(5) (A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings