

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 072899C]

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting via teleconference.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Ad-Hoc Salmon Nonretention Mortality Committee will confer by telephone.

DATES: The teleconference call will begin Friday, August 20, 1999, at 9 a.m. PDT.

ADDRESSES: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for call locations.

Council address: Pacific Fishery Management Council, 2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224, Portland, OR 97201.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Coon, Salmon Fishery Management Coordinator; telephone: (503) 326-6352.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The public may participate at the following call locations:

1. Pacific Fishery Management Council office, 2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224, Portland, OR
2. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 600 Capitol Way N, Olympia, WA
Contact: Phil Anderson, (360) 902-2720;
3. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2040 SE Marine Science Drive, Newport, OR
Contact: Rod Kaiser, (541) 867-4741 extension 240;
4. California Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA
Contact: LB Boydston, (916) 653-6281;
5. National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA
Contact: Bill Robinson, (206) 526-6142.

The primary purpose of the conference is to review and direct the completion of work assignments in developing updated, scientifically based recommendations for reliable and consistent estimates of nonretention mortality in ocean salmon fisheries under Council management. The Ad-Hoc Committee will report the results of this conference to the Council on September 14, 1999, in Portland, OR.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Committee for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice.

Special Accommodations

The public participation sites are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. John Rhoton at (503) 326-6352 at least 5 days prior to the conference date.

Dated: July 28, 1999.

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**

[Docket No. 980817219-8219-01. I.D. 073099A]

RIN 0648-AL58

Procedures Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of Availability; final revised environmental review procedures for NOAA.

SUMMARY: This document announces the availability of final revised environmental review procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The revisions update the agency's original procedures published in 1984, based on changing Agency direction, laws, and public concerns. The revisions reflect new initiatives and mandates for NOAA, particularly involving the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), Endangered Species Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act. The revisions provide information on preparing NEPA documents and streamlining of NEPA and other analyses or documents within NOAA.

DATES: September 3, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ramona Schreiber or Steve Kokkinakis,

Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, 202-482-5181. A copy of the final revised NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6 is available from the contacts listed here or via the Internet at: <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/nao/216-6.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NOAA's existing environmental review procedures for implementing NEPA appear in NAO 216-6. These procedures are consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA. NOAA's procedures were last revised in 1991. Consistent with CEQ regulation (40 CFR 1507.3(a)), NOAA published a Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register** on October 28, 1998 (FR 57664). That document announced the availability of draft revisions to NAO 216-6. Three sets of public comments were received and considered in the preparation of the final revised NAO 216-6. No modifications to the draft guidelines were necessary as a result of the comments received. NOAA has also consulted with CEQ prior to finalizing the revised NAO 216-6.

Comments and Responses

Comment 1: Two comments recommended that NOAA make its procedures regarding Endangered Species Act (ESA)-related categorical exclusions consistent with those of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Specifically, USFWS authorizes categorical exclusions for conservation agreements that require an incidental take statement; the commenter suggests that NOAA do the same. In addition, one comment suggested that NOAA align its overall ESA-related guidelines to match USFWS guidance.

Response: NOAA recognizes that its guidance regarding conservation agreements differs slightly from that of the USFWS. NOAA's procedures describe cases where an incidental take statement for a conservation agreement may receive a categorical exclusion, when the statement is considered to be a "low-effect". In those cases a categorical exclusion may be appropriate. Requirement of an environmental assessment for those conservation agreements that receive an incidental take statement for a greater effect is consistent with NOAA's ESA implementation guidelines. A modification of NOAA's procedures was not considered appropriate. NOAA coordinates with USFWS on many actions, however each agency has its independent policies. Thus, NOAA and USFWS may provide differing guidance