

The amount allocated for the S-K Program has declined from over \$9.8 million in FY 1996 to \$1.9 million for FY 2000. We expect to fund no more than 20 proposals from the FY 2000 program. The Administration's request for the FY 2001 program is also \$1.9 million.

In proposing the program scope and priorities, we also considered the availability of other sources of funding for fisheries research and development. For example, we propose to limit the funding priority for aquaculture to only the off-shore marine environment, not land-based or near-shore aquaculture, which are the focus of programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program. We would accept only those applications that directly relate to eventually establishing aquaculture in the off-shore environment, or to minimizing barriers to such development.

Electronic Access Addresses

The FY 2000 solicitation and this document requesting comments on the FY 2001 priorities are available on the NMFS S-K Home Page at: www.nmfs.gov/sfweb/skhome.html. The FY 2001 solicitation, when published, will be available at the same site.

The 1998 updated Executive Summary of the NOAA Strategic Plan is available at: www.strategic.noaa.gov/ and the Magnuson-Stevens Act (as amended through October 11, 1996) is available at: www.nmfs.gov/sfa/magact/.

The list of species that are currently under Federal Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) is in the publication, *Status of Fisheries of the United States*, available at: www.nmfs.gov/sfa/reports.html.

If you are unable to access the electronic addresses listed in this section, this information can also be obtained from any of the NMFS offices listed in this document (see ADDRESSES).

Proposed Scope and Funding Priorities

The scope of the FY 2001 S-K Program will be limited to federally managed marine species. (We will not accept applications dealing with Great Lakes species or state-managed species.) The proposed priorities listed are not in any particular order and each is of equal importance.

A. Conservation Engineering

Reduce or eliminate adverse interactions (that affect fishing activity) between fishing operations and nontargeted, protected, or prohibited

species, including the inadvertent take, capture, or destruction of such species. These include juvenile or sublegal-sized fish and shellfish, females of certain crabs, fish listed under the Endangered Species Act, marine turtles, seabirds, or marine mammals.

Improve the survivability of fish discarded or intentionally released and of protected species released in fishing operations.

Reduce or eliminate impacts of fishing activity on essential fish habitat that adversely affect the sustainability of the fishery.

B. Optimum Utilization of Harvested Fishery Resources Currently Under Federal Management

Reduce or eliminate factors such as diseases, human health hazards, and quality problems that limit the marketability of federally managed species and their products, in the United States and abroad.

Minimize harvest losses of federally managed species.

Develop usable products from economic discards (whole fish discarded because they are an undesirable species, size, or sex, or parts of fish discarded as not commercially useful) and byproducts of processing of federally managed species.

C. Fishing Community Transition

Help fishing communities to address the socioeconomic effects of overfishing and overcapitalized fisheries through such activities as planning and demonstration projects. Specific areas for these activities could include retraining of fishermen for alternative employment, alternative uses for existing fishing industry infrastructure, and planning for fishing capacity reduction. Activities may complement, but should not duplicate, programs available from other Federal, state, or local agencies.

D. Marine Aquaculture in the Off-Shore Environment

Advance the implementation of marine aquaculture in the off-shore environment (*i.e.*, the EEZ) by addressing technical aspects such as systems engineering, environmental compatibility, and culture technology. Applications must demonstrate that the goal is to support off-shore industry development.

Reduce or eliminate legal and social barriers to off-shore aquaculture development, *e.g.*, legal constraints, use conflicts, exclusionary mapping, and appropriate institutional roles.

Development of FY 2001 S-K Grant Program

We will consider any comments we receive in response to this notice in developing the solicitation notice for the FY 2001 S-K Program. We expect to publish the notice of program in the **Federal Register** around March 15, 2000. Even though we are publishing this request for comments we are not required to solicit applications for the FY 2001 S-K Program.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

The S-K Grant Program is listed in the "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance" under number 11.427, Fisheries Development and Utilization Research and Development Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program.

Dated: February 16, 2000.

Penelope D. Dalton,

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 00-4474 Filed 2-24-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 021600C]

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.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Capacity Committee (Committee) in March, 2000. Recommendations from the committee will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will be held on March 9, 2000, at 10:00 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, One Newbury Street, Route 1, Peabody, MA 01960; telephone: (978) 535-8238.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Newburyport, MA 01950; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee will continue its exploration

of fishing capacity issues. The Committee will review available information that may indicate the status of capacity in New England fisheries. Committee members will prioritize the problems caused by excess capacity in New England fisheries, and will identify possible solutions to identified problems. The Committee will develop alternatives on how to address fishing capacity issues. These suggested alternatives will be referred to the Council and the appropriate species oversight committees for further development as appropriate.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, 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 and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is 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: February 17, 2000.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

[FR Doc. 00-4477 Filed 2-24-00; 8:45 am]

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COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS

New Export Visa and Certification Stamps for Certain Textiles and Textile Products Produced or Manufactured in Japan

February 18, 2000.

AGENCY: Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

ACTION: Issuing a directive to the Commissioner of Customs providing for the use of a new export visa stamp and a new certification stamp.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ross Arnold, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S.

Department of Commerce, (202) 482-4212.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended; section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1854); Uruguay Round Agreements Act.

Three of the textile visa issuing bodies for Japan are being merged into one and will use one stamp for goods exported on and after April 1, 2000. That is, the Japan Textiles Exporters' Association, the Japan Textile Products Exporters Association, and the Japan Woolen & Linen Textiles Exporters Association will merge into one organization: the Japan Textiles Exporters Association. Also, a fourth textile visa issuing body, Japan General Merchandise Exporters' Association, will no longer be authorized to issue visas for Japan.

Effective on April 1, 2000, goods exported on and after April 1, 2000 must be accompanied by the textile visa or exempt certification with the "Japan Textiles Exporters Association" name on it. The requirement that both of these stamps be in blue ink remains. There will be a grace period from April 1, 2000 through April 30, 2000. Goods exported prior to April 1, 2000, and during the one-month grace period may be allowed entry with either the new "Japan Textiles Exporters Association" textile visa or exempt certification, or the old visa with "The Japan Textiles Exporters' Association", the "Japan Textile Products Exporters Association", the "Japan Woolen & Linen Textiles Exporters Association", or the "Japan General Merchandise Exporters' Association" name on the visa stamp, or the old exempt certification stamp with "The Japan Textile Products Exporters Association" name on it. Goods exported on and after May 1, 2000 must have either a valid visa or exempt certification with the "Japan Textiles Exporters Association" name on it.

See 52 FR 4639, published on February 13, 1987; 54 FR 31069, published on July 26, 1989; and 62 FR 10027, published on March 5, 1997.

Troy H. Cribb,

Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements

February 18, 2000.

Commissioner of Customs,
Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC 20229.

Dear Commissioner: This directive amends, but does not cancel, the directive issued to you on February 6, 1987, as amended, by the Chairman, Committee for

the Implementation of Textile Agreements. That directive directed you to prohibit entry of certain textiles and textile products, produced or manufactured in Japan for which the Government of Japan has not issued an appropriate visa or exempt certification.

Three of the textile visa issuing bodies for Japan are being merged into one and will use one stamp for goods exported on and after April 1, 2000. That is, the Japan Textiles Exporters' Association, the Japan Textile Products Exporters Association, and the Japan Woolen & Linen Textiles Exporters Association will merge into one organization: the Japan Textiles Exporters Association. Also, a fourth textile visa issuing body, Japan General Merchandise Exporters' Association, will no longer be authorized to issue visas for Japan.

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Shipments entered or withdrawn from warehouse according to this directive which are not accompanied by an appropriate export visa shall be denied entry and a new visa must be obtained.

The Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements has determined that this action falls within the foreign affairs exception to the rulemaking provisions of 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(1).