DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Intent To Hold Public Forums To Solicit Feedback From the Public Regarding the Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing Program

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Responding to President Obama’s initiative for an open, transparent government, the Rural Housing Service, hereinafter referred to as the Agency, intends to hold public forums to solicit feedback from the public on whether the current method of delivering the self-help program is the most efficient and cost effective in terms of cost and program delivery. Transparency encourages accountability by delivering information to the public about what the Government is doing. Participation provides the public with opportunities to contribute ideas and expertise to the Government which will enable them to make sound policy decisions that represent a wider group of diverse individuals throughout society. Collaboration improves effectiveness of the Government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of government, and between the Government and private institutions.

The Agency will use information obtained from public forums to evaluate all aspects of the self-help program. As the Agency moves forward, it will continue to encourage and solicit feedback, recommendations, and comments from all sectors of the public. All information relative to these forums will be taped, transcribed, and posted to the Agency Web site.

DATES: Public forums are scheduled for February through June 2010. All written questions and comments must be received by the Agency prior to June 30, 2010. The public forums will be held in selected states and the Washington, DC area.

ADDRESSES: Send questions and comments to: Debra S. Arnold, Program Analyst, Program Support Staff, Rural Housing Service, USDA at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 0761, Washington, DC 20250–0761, telephone (202) 720–1366, fax: (202) 690–4335, e-mail debra.arnold@wdc.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Debra S. Arnold, Program Analyst, Program Support Staff, Rural Housing Service, USDA at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 0761, Washington, DC 20250–0761, telephone (202) 720–1366, fax: (202) 690–4335, e-mail debra.arnold@wdc.usda.gov. For participants who require a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations, please contact Debra S. Arnold as directed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: One of the major areas within the Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Program that the Agency will be focusing on is the Technical and Management Assistance (T&MA) contracts. The contracts task regional non-profit organizations to provide training and technical assistance to recipients of the Section 523 grants. These recipients, referred to as Section 523 grantees, provide technical assistance to low and very low-income families to build their homes in rural areas. In addition to assisting the Section 523 grantees, the contractors are also required to market the self-help program, monitor the progress of active Section 523 grantees, and provide training to both grantees and families.

The location and time of the forums will be determined at a later date and announced locally. Registration information and deadlines will be provided at that time. In addition, this information will be posted to the Agency Web site.


Tammye Trevino,
Administrator, Rural Housing Service.
examiner’s report, and finds that the requirements of the FTZ Act and the Board’s regulations are satisfied, and that the proposal is in the public interest:

Now, therefore, the Board hereby orders:

The application for manufacturing authority under zone procedures within FTZ 26 on behalf of Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, Inc., as described in the application and Federal Register notice, is approved, subject to the FTZ Act and the Board’s regulations, including Section 400.28.

Signed at Washington, DC, this 25th day of January 2010.

Ronald K. Lorentzen,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Import Administration, Alternate Chairman, Foreign–Trade Zones Board.

Attest:
Andrew McGilvray,
Executive Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–AY56
Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Amendment 32 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico

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

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS); scoping; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS, Southeast Region, in collaboration with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) intends to prepare a DEIS to describe and analyze management alternatives to be included in an amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (FMP). These alternatives will consider measures to end overfishing of gag; create a rebuilding plan for the gag stock that will restore the stock to its maximum sustainable yield level (MSY); adjust gag and red grouper annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs), and other management measures; and revise shallow-water grouper accountability measures (AMs). In addition, the DEIS will consider separating the recreational sector of the grouper component of the reef fish fishery, revising multi-use individual fishing quota (IFQ) shares, methods to reduce gag bycatch, and improving data collection and monitoring of the recreational sector. The purpose of this notice of intent (NOI) is to solicit public comments on the scope of issues to be addressed in the DEIS.

DATES: Written comments on the scope of issues to be addressed in the DEIS must be received by NMFS by March 4, 2010.

ADDRESSES: Requests for information packets, written comments on the scope of the DEIS, suggested alternatives and potential impacts, and requests for additional information on the amendment should be sent to Peter Hood, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701–5505; telephone (727) 824–5305; fax (727) 824–5308. Comments may also be sent by email to Peter.Hood@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Hood; phone: (727) 824–5305; fax: (727) 824–5308; email: peter.hood@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Based on the results of the 2009 stock assessment update, NMFS notified the Council on August 11, 2009, that the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) gag stock was both overfished and undergoing overfishing. The gag stock has shown declines in indices of abundance since 2005. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), within two years of notifying the Council of a stock’s condition, a plan must be developed and implemented to end overfishing and rebuild the stock.

For Gulf gag and red grouper, ACLs must be reexamined in light of new information on the stocks. To rebuild the gag stock, an ACL, and optionally an ACT, must be set at levels that will prevent overfishing from occurring while allowing the gag stock to rebuild to a biomass level capable of producing MSY in 10 years or less. Although the 2009 stock assessment update of the red grouper stock in the Gulf of Mexico indicated the stock continues to be neither overfished or undergoing overfishing, the stock has declined since 2005. The ACT currently in effect exceeds the optimum yield level for 2010 and the acceptable biological catch level set by the Scientific and Statistical Committee for 2010.

In Amendment 30B, the AMs implemented for gag and red grouper were established under a quota system and do not reflect changes that occurred in the commercial sector when the IFQ system was implemented in January of 2010, including the incorporation of tilefish into the IFQ program. In addition, the AMs do not contain the overage adjustment for overfished stocks recommended by the National Standard 1 Guidelines. Therefore, the AMs for gag and red grouper should be revisited.

Private recreational fishing vessels and for-hire (charter and headboat) vessels are currently combined for management purposes into a single recreational sector. However, if each sector had its own ACL and ACT, managers would have greater flexibility in managing the sectors. The for-hire and private recreational sectors could potentially be given different fishing seasons, bag limits, or other management measures, and could improve the net benefits of the recreational grouper component of the reef fish fishery.

The IFQ system implemented for the commercial grouper and tilefish components of the Gulf reef fish fishery in 2010 allowed for flexibility in gag and red grouper harvest by allowing for multi-use shares (valid for harvesting either red or gag grouper). However, under the reduced red grouper and gag annual catch limits expected to be implemented through Amendment 32, it is possible that the use of multi-use shares could result in commercial harvest of red grouper or gag exceeding the sector allocation. To prevent this from happening, adjustments need to be made to the provision for multi-use shares in the grouper individual fishing quota system.

The reduced gag catch limits under the initial years of the rebuilding plan require substantial reductions in both commercial and recreational harvest. The commercial harvest can be reduced through an adjustment to the commercial quota, but the recreational sector has no quota. Recreational catch levels are managed primarily through a combination of bag limits, minimum size limits and closed seasons. A combination of management measures need to be adopted that will achieve the needed reductions in the recreational fishery.

Bycatch issues need to be addressed in both the commercial and recreational grouper fisheries. With the large difference between the red grouper and gag commercial quotas, this could result in large numbers of gag discards as fishermen direct effort to catch red grouper. Specifically, ways to reduce gag bycatch are needed in both sectors of the fishery. Proposed measures have