

Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

The items of discussion in the pre Data Workshop webinar are as follows:

1. Progress update from SEDAR 41 working groups.

2. Participants will present summary data and discuss data needs and treatments as necessary to prepare for the SEDAR 41 Data Workshop II.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified 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 intent to take final action to address the emergency.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to the SEDAR office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 10 business days prior to the meeting.

**Note:** The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: June 10, 2015.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2015-14627 Filed 6-12-15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice; public meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Joint Observer and Herring Committees to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from these groups will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

**DATES:** This meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 1, 2015 at 9:30 a.m.

#### ADDRESSES:

**Meeting address:** The meeting will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton (formerly Sheraton Colonial), 1 Audubon Road, Wakefield, MA 01880; telephone: (781) 245-9300; fax: (781) 245-0842.

**Council address:** New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The committees plan to review and discuss updated information and analyses for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for NMFS-led omnibus amendment to establish provisions for industry-funded monitoring (IFM) across all Council-managed fisheries. They will also review and discuss the elements of options for industry-funded monitoring in the Atlantic herring fishery, including at-sea monitoring, portside sampling, and electronic monitoring (EM); develop recommendations regarding the specific combinations of measures ("packages") to be analyzed in the Draft EA. Additionally, they will review updated information related to herring/mackerel economic analysis in omnibus IFM amendment. The committees will also discuss other elements of IFM amendment and develop related recommendations, as appropriate. Other business will be discussed as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before these groups for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. 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 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 Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: June 10, 2015.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2015-14628 Filed 6-12-15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### United States Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No.: PTO-P-2015-0030]

#### Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot

**AGENCY:** United States Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has a procedure under which an application will be advanced out of turn (accorded special status) for examination if the applicant files a petition to make special with the appropriate showing. The USPTO is providing a temporary basis (the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot) under which an appellant may have an *ex parte* appeal to the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (Board) accorded special status if the appellant withdraws the appeal in another application in which an *ex parte* appeal is also pending before the Board. The Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot will allow appellants having multiple *ex parte* appeals currently pending before the Board to have greater control over the priority with which their appeals are decided and reduce the backlog of appeals pending before the Board.

#### DATES:

**Effective Date:** June 19, 2015.

**Duration:** The Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot is being adopted on a temporary basis and will run until two thousand (2,000) appeals have been accorded special status under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot, or until June 20, 2016, whichever occurs earlier. The USPTO may extend the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot (with or without modification) on either a temporary or permanent basis, or may discontinue the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot after June 20, 2016, depending upon the results of the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steven Bartlett, Patent Trial and Appeal Board, by telephone at 571-272-9797, or by electronic mail message at [expeditedpatentappealspilot@uspto.gov](mailto:expeditedpatentappealspilot@uspto.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Appeals to the Board are normally taken up for decision by the Board in the order in which they are docketed. The USPTO

has a preexisting procedure under which an application will be advanced out of turn (accorded special status) if the applicant files a petition to make special with the appropriate showing. See 37 CFR 1.102 and MPEP § 708.02. The USPTO is adopting, on a temporary basis, the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot, under which an appellant may have an *ex parte* appeal to the Board in an application accorded special status if the appellant withdraws the appeal in another application or *ex parte* reexamination with an *ex parte* appeal also pending before the Board. The Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot will permit an appellant having multiple appeals pending before the Board to accelerate the Board decision on an appeal involving an invention of greater importance to the appellant, possibly hastening the pace at which the invention is patented and products or services embodying the patent are brought to the marketplace, and thus spurring follow-on innovation, economic growth, and job creation, by foregoing another pending appeal in which the underlying invention is no longer a business pursuit or priority to the appellant.

The USPTO will accord special status to an appeal pending before the Board under the following conditions:

(1) A certification and petition under 37 CFR 41.3 must be filed by the USPTO's electronic filing system (EFS-Web) in the application involved in the *ex parte* appeal for which special status is sought ("appeal to be made special"), identifying that application and appeal by application and appeal number, respectively. In addition, the appeal to be made special must be an appeal for which a docketing notice was mailed no later than June 19, 2015. Moreover, there must be no request for an oral hearing, or any request for an oral hearing must be withdrawn, for the appeal to be made special, and the appellant must agree not to request a refund of any oral hearing fees paid with respect to the appeal to be made special.

(2) The petition under 37 CFR 41.3 must include a request to withdraw the appeal in another application or *ex parte* reexamination for which a docketing notice was mailed no later than June 19, 2015 ("appeal to be withdrawn"), identifying that application or *ex parte* reexamination and appeal by application or reexamination control number and appeal number, respectively. The petition under 37 CFR 41.3 must be filed before the appeal to be withdrawn has been taken up for decision. The appellant also must agree not to request

a refund of any appeal fees, including oral hearing fees, paid with respect to the appeal to be withdrawn.

(3) The application involved in the appeal to be made special and the application or patent under reexamination involved in the appeal to be withdrawn must be either owned by the same party as of June 19, 2015, or name at least one inventor in common.

(4) The petition under 37 CFR 41.3 must be signed by a registered practitioner who has a power of attorney under 37 CFR 1.32, or has authority to act under 37 CFR 1.34, for the application involved in the appeal to be made special and for the application or patent under reexamination involved in the appeal to be withdrawn.

The USPTO has created a form-fillable Portable Document Format (PDF) "Petition to Make Special—Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot" (Form PTO/SB/438) for use in filing a certification and petition under 37 CFR 41.3 under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot. Form PTO/SB/438 is available on the USPTO's Internet Web site on the micro site for USPTO patent-related forms (<http://www.uspto.gov/patent/patents-forms>). Form PTO/SB/438 does not collect "information" within the meaning of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*). See 5 CFR 1320.3(h). Therefore, this notice does not involve information collection requirements which are subject to review by OMB.

No petition fee is required. The \$400.00 fee for a petition under 37 CFR 41.3 is hereby *sua sponte* waived for any petition to make an appeal special under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot.

The withdrawal of an appeal in an application or *ex parte* reexamination may not form the basis for more than one petition to make special under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot, including a petition to make special for a subsequent appeal in the application for which a petition to make an appeal special was granted, or any continuing application of the application for which a petition to make an appeal special was granted.

MPEP § 1203 provides that an application made special and advanced out of turn for examination will continue to be special throughout its entire course of prosecution in the Office, including appeal, if any, to the Board. An appeal that is accorded special status for decision on an appeal to the Board under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot will be advanced similarly out of turn for a decision on the appeal by the Board. The difference between the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot and

an application made special under 37 CFR 1.102 and MPEP § 708.02 is that an application in which an appeal is accorded special status for decision on an appeal to the Board under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot will not have a special status under CFR 1.102 and MPEP § 708.02 after the decision on the appeal.

The goal for handling an application in which a petition to make an appeal special under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot is filed is as follows: (1) Rendering a decision on the petition to make the appeal special no later than two (2) months from the filing date of the petition; and (2) rendering a decision on the appeal no later than four (4) months from the date a petition to make an appeal special under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot is granted. The current pendency of decided appeals in applications, for those appeals decided this fiscal year, ranges between an average of 24.7 months for appeals from applications assigned to Technology Center 1700 and an average of 32.5 months for appeals from applications assigned to Technology Center 1600, and is shown for each Technology Center in the following table:

Technology Center	Average months from docketing notice to board decision
1600 .....	32.5
1700 .....	24.7
2100 .....	32.0
2400 .....	32.0
2600 .....	31.7
2800 .....	26.9
2900 .....	26.1
3600 .....	31.7
3700 .....	29.9

*Ex parte* reexamination proceedings, including any appeal to the Board, are conducted with special dispatch within the USPTO. See 35 U.S.C. 305. The current average pendency of appeals in *ex parte* reexaminations, for those appeals decided this fiscal year, is 5.7 months. The USPTO is not making the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot applicable to appeals in *ex parte* reexaminations as these appeals already are handled with special dispatch, and the petition evaluation process would only delay the Board decision in an appeal in an *ex parte* reexamination.

The process for handling an application in which an appeal is withdrawn is set forth in MPEP § 1215. Appellants should specifically note that an application having no allowed claims becomes abandoned upon withdrawal of an appeal, and that claims indicated as

allowable but for their dependency from rejected claims are not considered allowed claims but are treated as rejected claims. See MPEP § 1215.01.

The filing of a request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114 in an application on appeal to the Board is treated as a request to withdraw the appeal and to reopen prosecution of the application before the examiner. See 37 CFR 1.114(d). A request for continued examination may be filed with a petition under 37 CFR 41.3, and the withdrawal of an appeal in that application resulting from the filing of such a request for continued examination may form the basis for a petition to make special based upon the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot. The withdrawal of an appeal resulting from the filing of a request for continued examination prior to the filing of a petition under 37 CFR 41.3, however, may not form the basis for a petition to make special based upon the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot.

As discussed previously, an application having no allowed claims becomes abandoned upon withdrawal of an appeal. Any request for continued examination, however, must be filed prior to the abandonment of the application. See 37 CFR 1.114(a)(2). Thus, an appellant wishing to file a request for continued examination in an application in which there is an appeal to be withdrawn under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot must, if there are no allowed claims, file the request for continued examination with the petition under 37 CFR 41.3 to ensure that the request for continued examination is filed prior to the abandonment of the application that will result from the dismissal of the appeal.

A request for continued examination must include a submission. See 37 CFR 1.114(a) and (c). An appeal brief, or a reply brief, or related papers, are not considered a submission under 37 CFR 1.114. See 37 CFR 1.114(c). The submission, however, may consist of the arguments in a previously filed appeal brief or reply brief, or may simply consist of a statement that incorporates by reference the arguments in a previously filed appeal brief or reply brief. See MPEP § 706.07(h).

The Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot is being adopted on a temporary basis until two thousand (2,000) appeals have been accorded special status under the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot, or until June 20, 2016, whichever occurs earlier. The USPTO may extend the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot (with or without modification) on either a temporary or permanent basis, or may discontinue the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot after June

20, 2016, depending upon the results of the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot. Additional information concerning the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot, including statistical information concerning the Expedited Patent Appeal Pilot and pendency of appeals before the Board, can found on the USPTO Internet Web site at: <https://www-cms.uspto.gov/patents-application-process/patent-trial-and-appeal-board/expedited-patent-appeal-pilot>.

Dated: June 10, 2015.

**Michelle K. Lee,**

*Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.*

[FR Doc. 2015-14754 Filed 6-12-15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-16-P**

## **BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION**

**[Docket No: CFPB-2015-0023]**

### **Agency Information Collection Activities: Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Bureau) is requesting new OMB control number information for a collection of information, titled, "Regulation F: Fair Debt Collection Practices Act."

**DATES:** Written comments are encouraged and must be received on or before August 14, 2015 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments, identified by the title of the information collection, OMB Control Number (see below), and docket number (see above), by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Attention: PRA Office), 1700 G Street NW., Washington, DC 20552.
- *Hand Delivery/Courier:* Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (Attention: PRA Office), 1275 First Street NE., Washington, DC 20002.

Please note that comments submitted after the comment period will not be accepted. In general, all comments received will become public records, including any personal information provided. Sensitive personal information, such as account numbers

or social security numbers, should not be included.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Documentation prepared in support of this information collection request is available at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Requests for additional information should be directed to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, (Attention: PRA Office), 1700 G Street NW., Washington, DC 20552, (202) 435-9575, or email: [PRA@cfpb.gov](mailto:PRA@cfpb.gov). Please do not submit comments to this mailbox.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title of Collection:* Regulation F: Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

*OMB Control Number:* 3170-XXXX.

*Type of Review:* Request for a new OMB Control Number.

*Affected Public:* State Governments.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 1.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 2.

*Abstract:* Regulation F (12 CFR part 1006) establishes procedures and criteria whereby states may apply to the Bureau for an exemption of a class of debt collection practices within the applying state from the provisions of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act as provided in section 817 of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 1692. The information collection request will seek OMB approval for the state application contained in 12 CFR 1006.2.

*Request for Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Bureau, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) The accuracy of the Bureau's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methods and the assumptions used; (c) Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: June 10, 2015.

**Ashwin Vasan,**

*Chief Information Officer, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.*

[FR Doc. 2015-14635 Filed 6-12-15; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4810-AM-P**