

Indian Tribes early in the process of developing this rule, and again after its proposal, to permit them to have meaningful and timely input into its development. A summary of that consultation and coordination follows.

EPA initiated a tribal consultation and coordination process before proposing this rule by sending a "Notification of Consultation and Coordination" letter on April 18, 2014, to all of the 566 then federally recognized tribes. EPA contacted all federally recognized tribes, even though only tribes with reservations can apply for TAS under the CWA, because it is possible that additional tribes could acquire reservation lands in the future. The letter invited tribal leaders and designated consultation representatives to participate in the tribal consultation and coordination process. EPA held two identical webinars concerning this matter for tribal representatives on May 22 and May 28, 2014. A total of 70 tribal representatives participated in the two webinars, and tribes and tribal organizations sent 20 pre-proposal comment letters to EPA. On August 7, 2015, EPA resumed the consultation and coordination process with tribes. A total of 44 tribal representatives participated in webinars in September 2015.

EPA received 21 comment letters from tribes and tribal associations during the public comment period. All tribal comments supported the proposal. Some tribes had questions about how EPA would handle reservation land status and boundary matters. Some comments urged EPA to help find solutions to tribal funding limitations. EPA will continue to consider tribal resource issues in its budgeting and planning process. However, EPA cannot assure tribes that additional funding will be available for a tribe to develop or implement a CWA regulatory program.

EPA considered all of the tribal comments in developing this interpretive rule. EPA's responses are included in sections IV and V of this rule and in the Response to Comments document in the docket for this rulemaking.

G. Executive Order 13045: Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks

EPA interprets Executive Order 13045 as applying only to those regulatory actions that concern environmental health or safety risks that EPA has reason to believe may disproportionately affect children, per the definition of "covered regulatory action" in section 2–202 of the

Executive Order. This interpretive rule is not subject to Executive Order 13045 because it does not concern an environmental health or safety risk.

H. Executive Order 13211: Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use

This interpretive rule is not subject to Executive Order 13211 because it is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866.

I. National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA)

This rulemaking does not involve technical standards.

J. Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions To Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

The human health or environmental risks addressed by this action will not have potential disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or indigenous populations. This rule affects the procedures tribes must follow to seek TAS for CWA regulatory purposes and does not directly affect the level of environmental protection.

K. Congressional Review Act (CRA)

This interpretive rule is exempt from the CRA because it is a rule of agency organization, procedure or practice that does not substantially affect the rights or obligations of non-agency parties.

Dated: May 5, 2016.

Gina McCarthy,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2016–11511 Filed 5–13–16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

47 CFR Part 90

[PS Docket No. 13–209, RM–11663; FCC 16–48]

Emission Mask Requirements for Digital Technologies on 800 MHz NPSPAC Channels; Analog FM Capability on Mutual Aid and Interoperability Channels

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This document amends the Commission's rules to guard against interference to critical public safety communications in the 800 MHz National Public Safety Planning

Advisory Committee (NPSPAC) band (806–809/851–854 MHz) and to enhance public safety system interoperability in the VHF, UHF and 800 MHz bands by specifying analog FM as the standard emission for use on all interoperability channels in these bands.

DATES: Effective June 15, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John A. Evanoff, Attorney-Advisor, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, (202) 418–0848 or john.evanoff@fcc.gov and Brian Marengo, Electronics Engineer, Policy and Licensing Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, (202) 418–0838 or brian.marengo@fcc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This is a summary of the Commission's *Report and Order* in PS Docket No. 13–209, FCC 16–48, released on April 25, 2016. The document is available for download at http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/. The complete text of this document is also available for inspection and copying during normal business hours in the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street SW., Room CY–A257, Washington, DC 20554. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an email to FCC504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202–418–0530 (voice), 202–418–0432 (TTY).

The *Report and Order* amends the rules to require digital technologies to comply with Emission Mask H when operated in the 800 MHz National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee (NPSPAC) band (806–809/851–854 MHz). The *Report and Order* also amends the rules to require equipment to have analog FM capability when operating on 800 MHz NPSPAC, VHF (150–170 MHz), and UHF (450–470 MHz) public safety mutual aid and interoperability channels. These rule changes will help safeguard public safety licensees in the NPSPAC band from adjacent-channel interference and preserve interoperability in the NPSPAC, VHF and UHF bands. Finally, the *Report and Order* terminates the existing freeze on equipment authorization announced in the *Public Notice*, 28 FCC Rcd 12661.

Procedural Matters

A. Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis required by section 604 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 604, is included in Appendix B of the *Report and Order*.

B. Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 Analysis

The actions taken in the *Report and Order* in PS Docket No. 13–209 have been analyzed with respect to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13, and found to impose no new or modified recordkeeping requirements or burdens on the public.

C. Congressional Review Act

The Commission will send a copy of this *Report and Order* to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (“CRA”), see 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

1. As required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended (RFA), an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) was incorporated in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). The Commission sought written public comment on the proposals in the NPRM, including comment on the IRFA. The comments received are discussed below. This present Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) conforms to the RFA.

A. Need for, and Objectives of, the Proposed Rules

2. The basic purpose of the *Report and Order* is to amend the Part 90 technical rules in order to prevent adjacent channel interference and promote interoperable public safety communications. In the *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* we proposed to adopt rules that guard against interference to critical public safety communications in the 800 MHz NPSPEC band and enhance public safety system interoperability in the VHF, UHF and 800 MHz bands. Most commenters submit that digital equipment should not be authorized in the NPSPEC band unless it complies with Emission Mask H because digital transmitters increase the potential for adjacent channel interference and reduce frequency reuse in the limited NPSPEC spectrum. Most commenters also believe that public safety radios should have analog FM capability when operating on the mutual aid and interoperability channels.

3. Based on the record, we conclude that the public interest will best be served by adopting the rules proposed in the *NPRM*, with certain changes that will reduce regulatory burdens on public safety entities and manufacturers. The rule changes adopted in this *Report and Order* provide certainty to public safety entities, regional planning committees

(RPC), equipment manufacturers, and equipment certification laboratories, and will ensure that licensed facilities operate under uniform technical parameters to maintain the extant interference environment in the NPSPEC band and promote interoperability.

B. Summary of Significant Issues Raised by Public Comments in Response to the IRFA

4. There were no comments raised that specifically addressed the proposed rules and policies presented in the IRFA. Nonetheless, we considered the potential impact of the rules proposed in the IRFA on small entities and reduced the compliance burden for all small entities in order to reduce the economic impact of the rules enacted herein on such entities.

5. First, our decision to apply the H Mask to digital technology is limited to equipment that operates in the sensitive interference environment of the NPSPEC band where 25 kilohertz channels are spaced only 12.5 kilohertz apart. We recognize that the NPSPEC channels are more susceptible to adjacent channel interference due to the 12.5 kilohertz channel spacing relative to the rest of the 800 MHz band where channels are spaced 25 kilohertz apart. Equipment not conforming to the H Mask would increase the potential for adjacent channel interference, require greater geographic separation to mitigate interference and thus reduce spectrum reuse of limited public safety spectrum. Thus, by amending the emission mask rules applicable to the NPSPEC band, we reduce the economic burden on public safety licensees in having to contend with increased adjacent channel interference and decreased spectrum availability.

6. Second, our decision to require analog FM common modulation capability promotes interoperability on the mutual aid channels and the VHF/UHF interoperability channels. In light of the embedded base of analog FM equipment on the mutual aid and VHF/UHF interoperability channels, we believe that requiring a common modulation scheme is a low-cost measure to ensure that these channels remain available during times of crisis.

7. Third, the record shows that the benefits to public safety users of requiring (1) digital technologies to comply with Emission Mask H when operating in the NPSPEC band and (2) equipment to have analog FM capability when operating on 800 MHz, VHF, and UHF public safety mutual aid and interoperability channels exceed the asserted costs of (1) compliance with

Emission Mask H, and (2) providing analog FM capability. Additionally, public safety agencies that wish to use non-H Mask compliant digital emissions for non-interoperable communications may apply for authorizations in the 4.5 MHz of 800 MHz interleaved spectrum.

C. Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Proposed Rules Will Apply

8. The RFA directs agencies to provide a description of, and, where feasible, an estimate of, the number of small entities that may be affected by the rules adopted herein. The RFA generally defines the term “small entity” as having the same meaning as the terms “small business,” “small organization,” and “small governmental jurisdiction.” In addition, the term “small business” has the same meaning as the term “small business concern” under the Small Business Act (SBA). A “small business concern” is one which: (1) Is independently owned and operated; (2) is not dominant in its field of operation; and (3) satisfies any additional criteria established by the Small Business Administration (SBA).

9. Private Land Mobile Radio Licensees. PLMR systems serve an essential role in a range of industrial, business, land transportation, and public safety activities. These radios are used by companies of all sizes operating in all U.S. business categories, and are often used in support of the licensee’s primary (non-telecommunications) business operations. For the purpose of determining whether a licensee of a PLMR system is a small business as defined by the SBA, we use the broad census category, Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except Satellite).

10. The Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except satellite) industry comprises establishments engaged in operating and maintaining switching and transmission facilities to provide communications via the airwaves. Establishments in this industry have spectrum licenses and provide services using that spectrum, such as cellular phone services, paging services, wireless Internet access, and wireless video services. The appropriate size standard under SBA rules for the category Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except satellite) is that a business is small if it has 1,500 or fewer employees. Census data for 2007 show that there were 1,383 such firms that operated for the entire year. Of this total, 1,368 firms had fewer than 1000 employees. Thus, under this category and the associated small business size standard, the Commission estimates that

the majority of wireless telecommunications carriers (except satellite) are small.

11. The definition of the Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except satellite) industry provides that a small entity is any such entity employing no more than 1,500 persons. The Commission does not require PLMR licensees to disclose information about number of employees, so the Commission does not have information that could be used to determine how many PLMR licensees constitute small entities under this definition. We note that PLMR licensees generally use the licensed facilities in support of other business activities, and therefore, it would also be helpful to assess PLMR licensees under the standards applied to the particular industry subsector to which the licensee belongs.

12. As of November 1, 2012, there were 1,185 PLMR licensees operating in the PLMR band between 806–809/851–854 MHz (NPSPAC band) and 686 PLMR licensees operating on the VHF and UHF public safety interoperability channels. We note that any entity engaged in a commercial activity is eligible to hold a PLMR license, and that any revised rules in this context could therefore potentially impact small entities covering a great variety of industries.

13. Small Businesses, Small Organizations, and Small Governmental Jurisdictions. Our action may, over time, affect small entities that are not easily categorized at present. We therefore describe here, at the outset, three comprehensive, statutory small entity size standards that encompass entities that could be directly affected by the amended rules. As of 2009, small businesses represented 99.7% of the 28.2 million businesses in the United States, according to the SBA. Additionally, a “small organization” is generally “any not-for-profit enterprise which is independently owned and operated and is not dominant in its field.” Nationwide, as of 2007, there were approximately 1,621,315 small organizations. Finally, the term “small governmental jurisdiction” is defined generally as “governments of cities, counties, towns, townships, villages, school districts, or special districts, with a population of less than fifty thousand.” Census Bureau data for 2007 indicate that there were 89,527 governmental jurisdictions in the United States. We estimate that, of this total, as many as 88,761 entities may qualify as “small governmental jurisdictions.” Thus, we estimate that most governmental jurisdictions are small.

14. RF Equipment Manufacturers. The Census Bureau defines this category as follows: “This industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in manufacturing radio and television broadcast and wireless communications equipment. Examples of products made by these establishments are: Transmitting and receiving antennas, cable television equipment, GPS equipment, pagers, cellular phones, mobile communications equipment, and radio and television studio and broadcasting equipment.” The SBA small business size standard for Radio and Television Broadcasting and Wireless Communications Equipment Manufacturing is all such firms having 750 or fewer employees. According to Census Bureau data for 2007, there were a total of 939 establishments in this category that operated for the entire year. Of this total, 912 had employment of under 500, and an additional 10 had employment of 500 to 999. Thus, under this size standard, the majority of firms can be considered small.

D. Description of Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Other Compliance Requirements

15. The *Report and Order* adopts two principal rule changes that will affect reporting, recordkeeping and other compliance requirements. The *Report and Order* retains our 800 MHz NPSPAC emission mask rules and explicitly requires digital emission transmitters to comply with Emission Mask H when operated on 800 MHz NPSPAC channels. The *Report and Order* also requires mobile and portable transmitters to have analog FM modulation capability on the public safety mutual aid and VHF/UHF interoperability frequencies. Digital emission transmitters have characteristics that differ from analog FM transmitters and, hence, have a greater likelihood of causing adjacent-channel interference. The Commission developed specific emission masks for digital emissions, including Mask H for digital emissions in the 800 MHz NPSPAC band. Industry practice recognizes that (1) digitally-modulated signals must be certified under the H-Mask for use in public safety spectrum and (2) radios intended for use on mutual aid and interoperability channels must be capable of analog FM operation. We expect that large and small manufacturers already comply with these proposed regulations. However, to the extent some manufacturers do not already comply with these regulations and industry standards, we expect that such manufacturers would refrain from

marketing their equipment to public safety entities as being in compliance with the Commission’s rules and ensure that their equipment performs consistent with these regulations designed to prevent interference and preserve interoperability. The Commission’s equipment certification process will serve to ensure that equipment complies with Emission Mask H when operated in the NPSPAC band and that it has FM modulation capability on public safety mutual aid and VHF/UHF interoperability frequencies. Some manufacturers may submit new or amended applications for equipment certification accompanied by the requisite engineering showings that demonstrate compliance with the rules adopted in the *Report and Order*. See OMB Control No. 3060–0057.

E. Steps Taken To Minimize Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities, and Significant Alternatives Considered

16. The RFA requires an agency to describe any significant alternatives that it has considered in developing its approach, which may include the following four alternatives (among others): “(1) the establishment of differing compliance or reporting requirements or timetables that take into account the resources available to small entities; (2) the clarification, consolidation, or simplification of compliance and reporting requirements under the rule for such small entities; (3) the use of performance rather than design standards; and (4) an exemption from coverage of the rule, or any part thereof, for such small entities.”

17. We have evaluated our rule changes in the context of small business entities and find no alternatives, to the benefit of small entities that would achieve our goals of adjacent channel interference avoidance and facilitating nationwide interoperability. Additionally, the rules we adopt are consistent with industry practice and reflect the embedded base of public safety equipment on these channels. Accordingly, we expect most manufacturers and public safety licensees already comply with our regulations, therefore minimizing any significant economic impact on small entities. We believe that these restrictions on adjacent channel interference and interoperability compliance requirements are the minimum needed, when weighed against the significant benefits to small entities, including public safety entities, that result from the approach we are adopting here. In order to further minimize the economic impact on small entities, the rules require analog FM

capability only in subscriber units in order to achieve interoperability.

F. Federal Rules That May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict With the Proposed Rules

18. None.

G. Report to Congress

19. The Commission will send a copy of the *Report and Order*, including this FRFA, in a report to be sent to Congress pursuant to the Congressional Review Act. In addition, the Commission will send a copy of the *Report and Order*, including this FRFA, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the SBA. A copy of the *Report and Order* and FRFA (or summaries thereof) is also being published in the **Federal Register**.

Ordering Clauses

20. Accordingly, *it is ordered*, pursuant to Sections 1, 2, 4(i), 4(j), 301, 302, 303, 308, 309(j), and 332 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 151, 152, 154(i), 154(j), 301, 302, 303, 308, 309(j), and 332, that this *Report and Order* is hereby ADOPTED. Part 90 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR part 90, is revised as set forth in Appendix A to this *Report and Order*. These rule revisions will take effect 30 days after the date of publication of the text thereof in the **Federal Register**.

21. *It is further ordered* that the equipment authorization freeze announced in the Public Notice, 28 FCC Rcd 12661, shall be terminated on the date the rule revisions as set forth in Appendix A become effective.

22. *It is further ordered* that the Commission's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Reference Information Center, shall send a copy of

this *Report and Order*, including the Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

23. *It is further ordered* that the Commission shall send a copy of this *Report and Order*, to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to the Congressional Review Act, see 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A).

List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 90

Radio.

Federal Communications Commission.

Gloria J. Miles,

Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Federal Communications Commission amends 47 CFR part 90 as follows:

PART 90—PRIVATE LAND MOBILE RADIO SERVICES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 90 continues to read as follows:

Authority: Sections 4(i), 11, 303(g), 303(r), and 332(c)(7) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 154(i), 161, 303(g), 303(r), 332(c)(7).

■ 2. Section 90.20 is amended by revising paragraph (d)(80) to read as follows:

§ 90.20 Public Safety Pool.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

(80) After December 7, 2000 this frequency is available primarily for public safety interoperability only communications. Stations licensed prior to December 7, 2000 may continue to use this frequency on a co-primary basis until January 1, 2005. After January 1,

2005, all operations will be secondary to co-channel interoperability communications. Analog FM emission shall exclusively be used for operation on the VHF and UHF interoperability channels.

* * * * *

■ 3. Section 90.203 is amended by revising paragraphs (i) and (j)(1) to read as follows:

§ 90.203 Certification required.

* * * * *

(i) Mobile/portable equipment capable of use in the 806–809/851–854 MHz band segment and submitted for certification thirty or more days after publication of a summary of the *Report and Order*, (FCC 16–48, released April 25, 2016) in PS Docket 13–209 in the **Federal Register** must have the capability to operate in the analog FM mode on the mutual aid channels designated in § 90.617(a)(1) of the rules.

(j) * * *

(1) Applications for certification of mobile and portable equipment designed to transmit voice on public safety frequencies in the 150–174 MHz or 450–470 MHz band will be granted only if the mobile/portable equipment is capable of operating in the analog FM mode on the nationwide public safety interoperability channels in the 150–174 MHz band or 450–470 MHz band, as appropriate. (See § 90.20(c), (d)(80) of this part.)

* * * * *

■ 4. Section 90.210 is amended by adding footnote 6 to the entry for 806–809/851–854 in the Applicable Emission Masks table to read as follows:

§ 90.210 Emission masks.

* * * * *

APPLICABLE EMISSION MASKS

Frequency band (MHz)	Mask for equipment with audio low pass filter	Mask for equipment without audio low pass filter
806–809/851–854 ⁶	B	H

⁶ Transmitters utilizing analog emissions that are equipped with an audio low-pass filter must meet Emission Mask B. All transmitters utilizing digital emissions and those transmitters using analog emissions without an audio low-pass filter must meet Emission Mask H.

■ 5. Section 90.617 is amended by revising paragraph (a)(1) to read as follows:

§ 90.617 Frequencies in the 809.750–824/854.750–869 MHz, and 896–901/935–940 MHz bands available for trunked, conventional or cellular system use in non-border areas.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(1) Channels numbers 1–230 are also available to eligible applicants in the Public Safety Category in non-border areas. The assignment of these channels

will be done in accordance with the policies defined in the Report and Order in Gen. Docket No. 87–112 (See § 90.16). The following channels are available only for mutual aid purposes as defined in Gen. Docket No. 87–112: Channels 1, 39, 77, 115, 153. Mobile and portable radios operating on the mutual aid channels shall employ analog FM emission.

* * * * *

■ 6. Section 90.619 is amended by revising paragraphs (a)(5)(i) and (c)(6)(i) to read as follows:

§ 90.619 Operations within the U.S./Mexico and U.S./Canada border areas.

(a) * * *

(5) * * *

(i) Channel numbers 1–230 are also available to eligible applicants in the Public Safety Category in the Canada Border Regions. The assignment of these channels will be done in accordance with the policies defined in the Report and Order of Gen. Docket No. 87–112 (See § 90.16). The following channels are available only for mutual aid purposes as defined in Gen. Docket No. 87–112: Channels 1, 39, 77, 115, 153. Mobile and portable radios operating on the mutual aid channels shall employ analog FM emission.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(6) * * *

(i) Channel numbers 1–230 are also available to eligible applicants in the Public Safety Category in the Canada Border Regions. The assignment of these channels will be done in accordance with the policies defined in the Report and Order of Gen. Docket No. 87–112 (See § 90.16). The following channels are available only for mutual aid purposes as defined in Gen. Docket No. 87–112: Channels 1, 39, 77, 115, 153. Mobile and portable radios operating on the mutual aid channels shall employ analog FM emission.

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[FR Doc. 2016–11336 Filed 5–13–16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

49 CFR Parts 171, 173, and 178

[Docket No. PHMSA–2015–0271 (HM–261)]

RIN 2137–AF15

Hazardous Materials: Incorporation by Reference Edition Update for the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code and Transportation Systems for Liquids and Slurries: Pressure Piping Code

Correction

In rule document 2016–10027 appearing on pages 25613–25618 in the issue of Friday, April 29, 2016, make the following correction:

On page 25614, in the first column, in the “**DATES:**” section, beginning on the 14th line, “[insert date 60 days after publication in the **Federal Register**]” should read “June 28, 2016”.

[FR Doc. C1–2016–10027 Filed 5–13–16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 1505–01–D

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 151210999–6348–02]

RIN 0648–XE620

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery; 2016 Closure of the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area will close for the remainder of the 2016 fishing year. No vessel issued a federal scallop permit, with the exception of Northern Gulf of Maine permit holders also holding a Maine state scallop permit and fishing under the state waters exemption program in Maine state waters, may fish for, possess, or land scallops from the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area. Regulations require this action once NMFS projects that 100 percent of the 2016 total allowable catch for the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area will be harvested.

DATES: Effective 0001 hr local time, May 13, 2016, through February 28, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shannah Jaburek, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 282–8456.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The reader can find regulations governing fishing activity in the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Scallop Management Area in 50 CFR 648.54 and § 648.62. These regulations authorize vessels issued a valid federal scallop permit to fish in the NGOM Scallop Management Area under specific conditions, including a total allowable catch (TAC) of 67,454 lb (30.6 mt) for the 2016 fishing year, and a State Waters Exemption Program for the state of Maine. NMFS reduced the 2016 NGOM Scallop Management Area TAC from 70,000 lb (31.8 mt) to 67,454 lb (30.6 mt) to account for a 2,546-lb (1,155-kg) over harvest of the 2015 TAC during the 2015 fishing year. Section 648.62(b)(2) requires the NGOM Scallop Management Area to be closed to federally permitted scallop vessels for the remainder of the fishing year once the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator determines that the TAC for fishing year 2016 is projected to be harvested. Any vessel that holds a federal NGOM permit (category LAGC B) may continue to fish in the Maine state waters portion of the NGOM Scallop Management Area under the State Waters Exemption Program found in § 648.54 provided they have a valid Maine state scallop permit and fish in state waters only.

Based on trip declarations by federally permitted scallop vessels fishing in the NGOM Scallop Management Area, and analysis of fishing effort, we project that the 2016 TAC will be harvested as of May 13, 2016. Therefore, in accordance with § 648.62(b)(2), the NGOM Scallop Management Area is closed to all federally permitted scallop vessels as of May 13, 2016. No vessel issued a federal scallop permit may fish for, possess, or land scallops in or from the NGOM Scallop Management Area after 0001 local time, May 13, 2016, unless the vessel is fishing exclusively in state waters and is participating in an approved state waters exemption program as specified in § 648.54. Any federally permitted scallop vessel that has declared into the NGOM Scallop Management Area, complied with all trip notification and observer requirements, and crossed the VMS demarcation line on the way to the area before 0001, May 13, 2016, may complete its trip. All limited access scallop vessels fishing on a day-at-sea must exit the NGOM Scallop