

effective data management, metadata, and archive techniques, which allow data to be accessed by and shared freely with the public.

(2) *Bathymetry*—The bathymetric data chapter focuses on procedures for collecting, processing, and delivering bathymetry acquired by multibeam, single beam, and phase-discriminating sonar, and light detection and ranging (lidar) systems and satellite-derived bathymetry. This chapter summarizes best practices for: positioning, system calibration and Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) techniques, coverage and resolution, uncertainty, tides and water levels, and general gridded data specifications.

(3) *Seabed and Lakebed Backscatter*—The backscatter data chapter focuses on establishing common backscatter acquisition and processing methods, acoustic signal corrections, and image processing steps leveraging existing guidelines and recommendations from the Marine Geological and Biological Habitat Mapping (GeoHab) Backscatter Working Group (BSWG), as well as expert input from government, industry, academic institutions, and other relevant bodies.

(4) *Water Column Sonar*—The water column sonar chapter focuses on collecting, processing, and delivering raw and interpreted backscatter from single beam and multibeam echosounders (MBES). This chapter summarizes best practices for system configurations, operating frequencies and depth ranges, system calibration, QA/QC techniques, and analysis, and interpretation of backscatter.

(5) *Side Scan Sonar*—The Side Scan Sonar (SSS) chapter focuses on collecting, processing, and delivering SSS data. This chapter summarizes best practices for acquisition standards and system set-up, range scales, frequencies and ping rates, coverage requirements, positioning, system calibration, QA/QC techniques, and derivation of products.

(6) *Sub-bottom*—The sub-bottom profiling chapter focuses on common system types, practical survey design, conventional acquisition procedures, processing protocols, data formats, and publication of subsurface imaging data. The chapter describes the standard operating procedure for the use of single-channel acoustic systems that commonly operate in the 0.2 to 24 kilohertz (kHz) frequency range to remotely image the surface morphology and near-surface stratigraphy.

(7) *Magnetometer*—The magnetometer chapter focuses on general magnetic theory as it relates to anomaly detectability, factors that influence data quality, instrument configuration and

selection, platforms, coverage specifications, testing and calibration, and resolution/line spacing based on survey objectives.

*Authority:* 33 U.S.C. 883e; 33 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*

**Christiaan van Westendorp,**

*RDML, NOAA, Director, Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF516]

#### Permanent Advisory Committee To Advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; Meeting Announcement

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces a public meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee (PAC) to advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC) on May 27, 2026. Meeting topics are provided under the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice.

**DATES:** The meeting of the PAC will be held via web conference on May 27, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time (HST) (or until business is concluded).

**ADDRESSES:** The public meeting will be conducted via web conference. For details on how to call in to the web conference or to submit comments, please contact Katrina Poremba, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; telephone: 808–725–5096; email: [katrina.poremba@noaa.gov](mailto:katrina.poremba@noaa.gov). Documents to be considered by the PAC will be sent out via email in advance of the conference call. Please submit contact information to Katrina Poremba (telephone: 808–725–5096; email: [pir.wcpfc@noaa.gov](mailto:pir.wcpfc@noaa.gov)) by May 7, 2026 to receive documents via email. This meeting may be recorded for the purpose of generating notes of the meeting. As public comments will be made publicly available, participants and public commenters are urged not to provide personally identifiable

information (PII) at this meeting. Participation in the meeting by web conference, or by telephone, constitutes consent to the audio recording.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Katrina Poremba, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818; telephone: 808–725–5096; email: [pir.wcpfc@noaa.gov](mailto:pir.wcpfc@noaa.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

In accordance with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (16 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*), the PAC has been formed to advise the U.S. Commissioners to the WCPFC. The PAC is composed of: (i) no less than 15 nor more than 20 individuals appointed by the Secretary of Commerce in consultation with the U.S.

Commissioners to the WCPFC; (ii) the chair of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Committee (or the chair's designee); and (iii) officials from the fisheries management authorities of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands (or their designees). The PAC supports the work of the U.S. National Section to the WCPFC in an advisory capacity. The U.S. National Section is made up of the U.S. Commissioners, the Department of State, and the U.S. head of delegation. NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office provides administrative and technical support to the PAC in cooperation with the Department of State. More information on the WCPFC, established under the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, can be found on the WCPFC website: <http://www.wcpfc.int>.

#### Meeting Topics

The purpose of the May 27, 2026 meeting is to discuss U.S. objectives leading up to the 23rd Regular Session of the WCPFC and its Subsidiary Body Meetings. There will also be an opportunity for the U.S. Participating Territories (American Samoa, Guam, and CNMI) to present their priority issues to the U.S. Commissioners.

#### Special Accommodations

The web conference is accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Katrina Poremba at 808–725–5096 by May 1, 2026.

*Authority:* 16 U.S.C. 6902 *et seq.*

Dated: March 19, 2026.

**David R. Blankinship,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No.: 260313-0081]

RIN 0648-BN96

#### Deep Seabed Mining: Notice of Receipt of Applications for Deep Seabed Mining Exploration Licenses and Announcement of Public Comment Period and Virtual Public Hearings

**AGENCY:** Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of applications for deep seabed mining exploration licenses; request for comments; notice of virtual public hearing.

**SUMMARY:** NOAA has received two applications for licenses to conduct seabed mining exploration activities that are fully compliant with the applicable information requirements of the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act (DSHMRA or the Act) and the Act's implementing regulations. As part of the application review process, NOAA will hold one virtual public hearing on American Metal Resources, LLC's (AMR) application and one virtual public hearing on SeaX, Inc.'s (SeaX) application, and will accept written comments on the applications submitted electronically via the instructions below.

**DATES:** Comments on the applications must be received by May 22, 2026. The virtual public hearing for AMR's application is scheduled for April 21, 2026, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time. For SeaX's application, the virtual public hearing is scheduled for April 22, 2026, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time. Instructions for attending the virtual public hearings are provided below.

**ADDRESSES:** The AMR application is electronically available at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-0034>; The SeaX application is electronically available at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-0035>. You may send comments, identified by docket number, by either of the following means:

#### Written Comments

- For the AMR application, submit all public written comments via the Federal [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) e-Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-0034> or go to [www.regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and enter "NOAA-NOS-2026-0034" in the search bar.

- For the SeaX application, submit all public written comments via the Federal [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) e-Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-0035> or go to [www.regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and enter "NOAA-NOS-2026-0035" in the search bar.

For each docket, locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Submit a comment" icon on the right of that line. Please note that comments will only be considered for the docket to which they are submitted. If your comment is in response to both the AMR application and the SeaX application, you must submit two comments, one to each docket.

Comments must be submitted by the date and electronic method described above to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NOAA. Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered. Comments that are not related to the applications or that contain profanity, vulgarity, threats, or other inappropriate language will not be considered. To ensure full consideration by NOAA, comments must be submitted in English. Comments that are not submitted in English may not be posted to the public dockets on [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov), or considered by NOAA. All relevant comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

#### Virtual Public Hearings

You may submit oral comments for AMR's Application during the April 21, 2026 meeting and oral comments for SeaX's Application during the April 22, 2026 meeting. Oral comments received during the hearing for AMR may not be considered as to SeaX, and vice versa.

NOAA will conduct two virtual public hearings via Adobe Connect.

Each person who wants to attend either virtual public hearing must electronically register by April 21, 2026, 5 p.m. Eastern Time. Attendance at each virtual public hearing will be limited to 1,000 individuals. Any person who registers and wants to speak at a virtual public hearing should indicate that they want to speak during registration. To register for either hearing, use the following link: [https://events-na13.adobeconnect.com/content/connect/c1/2358677976/en/events/event/shared/10627447973/event\\_landing.html?scoid=10651739456&charset=utf-8](https://events-na13.adobeconnect.com/content/connect/c1/2358677976/en/events/event/shared/10627447973/event_landing.html?scoid=10651739456&charset=utf-8). Any person who registers and wants to speak at a virtual public hearing should indicate that they want to speak during registration. Each registered participant will receive an Adobe Connect link for the virtual public hearing.

Once the virtual public hearing starts, NOAA will describe the virtual public hearing logistics. NOAA will then start the public comment part of the virtual public hearing and will call on speakers on a first come/first served basis through the raised hand function of Adobe Connect. NOAA will then unmute the person speaking. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak on the application (AMR application on April 21, 2026, and SeaX application on April 22, 2026). If a speaker does not respond when they are called on, NOAA will move to the next speaker. At the three-minute mark for each speaker, NOAA will mute that speaker. Speakers cannot allot their time to another speaker. Once all speakers have spoken, or at the scheduled end of the virtual public hearing, whichever is earlier, NOAA may end the virtual public hearing. NOAA retains discretion to extend the virtual public hearing if appropriate and feasible. NOAA will record each hearing and will include a transcript of each hearing on the appropriate public docket for each of the applications on the [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) website at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-0034> for the AMR application and at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NOS-2026-0035> for the SeaX application. The names provided by each speaker will also be published as part of the transcripts.

The virtual public hearings do not replace the process for submission of written comments. NOAA will not respond during the hearings to oral comments or questions. To ensure full consideration by NOAA, oral comments must be in English. Comments that are not in English may not be transcribed or considered by NOAA.