

Dated: October 18, 1996.
 Kalven L. Trice,
Deputy State Conservationist.
 [FR Doc. 96-27959 Filed 10-30-96; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 102496A]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Committee Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Improved Retention/Improved Utilization (IR/IU) Committee will meet November 14-15, 1996, in Seattle, WA.

DATES: The meeting will be held on November 14-15, 1996, beginning at 9:00 a.m. on November 14, and concluding by 5:00 p.m. on November 15.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Room 2079, Building 4, Seattle, WA.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris Oliver, telephone: 907-271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee's agenda will include the following:

(1) Discussion of issues associated with implementation of IR/IU regulations for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands groundfish fisheries.

(2) Discussion of the current vessel incentive program and how it will interact with the IR/IU program.

(3) Preparation of an outline of an IR/IU program for the Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries for Council review in December.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Helen Allen, 907-271-2809, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: October 25, 1996.
 Bruce Morehead,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
 [FR Doc. 96-27978 Filed 10-30-96; 8:45 am]
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[Docket No. 960412111-6297-04; I.D. 102396C]

RIN 0648-ZA20

West Coast Salmon Fisheries; Northwest Emergency Assistance Plan—Washington Salmon License Buy Out

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

ACTION: Final program notice.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this notice to describe the final program requirements and to respond to comments on proposed bidding options for the 1996 Washington Salmon License Buy Out (WSLB). Pursuant to the authority under the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA), the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) has made funds available to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to buy out salmon permits. The objectives of the program are to provide financial assistance to commercial salmon fishermen adversely impacted by the salmon fishery disaster, and to aid the long-term viability of the fishery resource.

DATES: Effective upon October 25, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Freese, (206) 526-6113.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 2, 1995, the Secretary declared that a fishery resource disaster continued in 1995 for the salmon fisheries of the Pacific States of California (north of San Francisco), Oregon, and Washington, excluding Puget Sound. Under the authority of the IFA of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 4107(d)), as amended, an additional \$12.7 million in Federal financial assistance was made available for affected salmon fishermen, of which \$5.25 million was set aside for a WSLB program. However, the Governor of Washington has requested that \$50,000 be transferred to the Data Collection Jobs Program for use in a troll data collection study. If approved, this \$50,000 will be taken from the funds initially allocated for the purchase of troll licenses, and will reduce the 1996 WSLB funds available to \$5.2 million. The Secretary already provided \$4 million for a similar program in 1995, bringing the total amount allocated to

license buy outs to \$9.2 million. (See Federal Register notice of October 11, 1994 (59 FR 51419), with subsequent amendments published on January 31, 1995 (60 FR 3908), and June 22, 1995 (60 FR 32507)).

On April 23, 1996, NMFS published a Federal Register notice (61 FR 17879) that provided the public with notice of a proposed WSLB program and requested comment on four proposed bidding options. The August 1, 1996, final notice (61 FR 40197) announced the final description for the Northwest Emergency Assistance Plan (NEAP) Habitat Restoration Program and the Data Collection Jobs Program, but cited state and local concerns and a lack of public consensus as grounds for the agency's deferral of the final decision on a buy out program until new bidding options were developed and the public was given notice and an opportunity to comment.

NMFS and the State of Washington then worked together to develop two new options that were similar to the options presented in the April 23, 1996, Federal Register notice, but with important differences. One difference was that the calculation of uninsured loss was no longer necessary under the recently amended IFA. (The IFA was amended during the public comment period associated with the April 23, 1996 notice.) This calculation was replaced by an analogous calculation, "salmon disaster impact" (SDI), which is equal to 2.5 times the difference between a fisherman's highest gross salmon fishery income derived from fishing during any calendar year 1986 through 1991 (base year), and the sum of the least amount of gross salmon fishery income derived from commercial salmon fishing during any calendar year from 1991 through 1995 (comparison year). The use of SDI in place of an uninsured loss determination puts similar restrictions on new participants as were placed on the original participants in the 1995 WSLB. Another difference was that the two new options placed lower ceilings on the maximum amount a fisherman can receive for his permit.

The following options were presented for public comment in the notice of August 29, 1996 (61 FR 45408).

Option 1—License holders may offer their licenses for any amount up to \$40,000 or their SDI, whichever is less. Licenses will be purchased starting with the lowest bid. In the event of a tie, preference will be given to the fisherman with the highest SDI.

Option 2—License holders may offer their licenses for any amount up to \$50,000 or their SDI, whichever is less.