

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Deep Seabed Mining Regulations for Exploration Licenses**

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before *May 9, 2008*.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6625, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dHynek@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Helen Farr, 301-713-3155, ext. 175 or Helen.Farr@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Abstract**

NOAA's regulations at 15 CFR 970 govern the issuing and monitoring of exploration licenses under the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act. Any persons seeking a license must submit certain information that allows NOAA to ensure the applicant meets the standards of the Act. Persons with licenses are required to conduct monitoring and make reports, and they may request revisions, transfers, or extensions of licenses.

II. Method of Collection

Paper submissions are used; however, applicants are encouraged to submit supporting documentation electronically when feasible.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0145.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 2.

Estimated Time per Response: 2,000-4,000 hours per application (no

applications are expected); 250 hours per renewal of application (1 application is expected to be renewed); and 20 hours per report (2 reports are expected).

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 290.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$700.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (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 OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 5, 2008.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. E8-4634 Filed 3-7-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), Notice of Public Comment Period for the DEIS and Schedule of Public Hearings for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's Review of Amendments to the Washington Coastal Management Program**

AGENCY: Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM).

ACTION: Notice of Availability of DEIS, Notice of Public Comment Period for the DEIS and Schedule of Public Hearings.

SUMMARY: NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management is issuing this notice to advise the public that a DEIS for OCRM's review of amendments to the Washington Coastal Management Program has been prepared and is available for public review and comment. Written requests for the DEIS and written comments on the DEIS can be submitted to the individual listed in the section **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Public Hearings will be held on April 10, 2008 and April 11, 2008. The public comment period commenced on February 29, 2008 as noticed in the **Federal Register** at <http://frwebgate4.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WAISSdocID=5668694961+0+0+0&WAISAction=retrieve> and will close on April 14, 2008.

Public Comment Hearings: The start of the public comment period on the DEIS commenced February 29, 2008 and will close on April 14, 2008. Two public hearings will be held; one on April 10, 2008 and one on April 11, 2008 in Lacey, Washington and Seattle, Washington, respectively. The public hearing on April 10th will be held in Lacey, Washington at the Washington State Department of Ecology Headquarters, (300 Desmond Drive) and will begin at 3:30 p.m. and last until 6:30 p.m. The public hearing on April 11th will be held in Seattle Washington at the Mountaineers Building, Tahoma 2 Room (300 Third Avenue West) and will begin at 3:30 p.m. and last until 6:30 p.m.

DEIS Availability and Review

Copies of the DEIS are available either on CD or hard copy by contacting Helen Farr at the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section below. In addition, the DEIS has been posted on OCRM's Web site at <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/assessments/welcome.html> and the Washington State Department of Ecology's Web site at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/czm>.

Comments from interested parties on the DEIS are encouraged and may be presented orally at the public hearings. Written comments may be submitted to OCRM during the public hearings and at the address (including e-mail address) in the section entitled **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

OCRM encourages all interested parties to provide comments concerning the scope and content of the DEIS. Comments should be as specific as possible and address the analysis of potential alternatives. This commenting procedure is intended to ensure that substantive comments and concerns are made available to OCRM in a timely

manner so that OCRM has an opportunity to address them.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The DEIS discloses the environmental consequences associated with OCRM's review of amendments to the State of Washington's federally-approved coastal management program (CMP). OCRM's approval of Washington's request to incorporate changes into the Washington CMP would allow the State to continue its certification as a federally-approved CMP, receive Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) funds to implement the revised program, and conduct State and federal consistency reviews based on the revised program policy. Incorporation of the revised Washington Shoreline Management Act Guidelines (SMA) will result in the following changes:

- Revise state guidelines requiring local governments located in the designated coastal zone to revise their Shoreline Master Programs to be consistent with the standards contained in the new Washington SMA;
- Achieve improved water quality, scenic beauty, safer development and a number of other new objectives consistent with the policies of the SMA;
- Make improvements to the existing shoreline environments as part of mitigation and restoration requirements;
- Give designated "critical" areas special attention where future development may result in negative impacts; and
- Ensure that activities that do not normally require a shoreline development permit still help achieve SMA policy goals.

The purpose and need for OCRM's review of the amendments is reviewed in the DEIS. All reasonable and prudent alternatives are being considered, including the no-action alternative.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Helen Farr, Environmental Protection Specialist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, OCRM/CPD, N/ORM3, Station 11209, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or Helen.Farr@noaa.gov. Ms. Farr may be contacted during business hours at (301) 713-3155, extension 175 (telephone) and 301-713-4367 (fax).

The comments period will close on April 14, 2008.

Dated: March 4, 2008.

David M. Kennedy,

Director, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog 11.419 Coastal Zone, Management Program Administration.

[FR Doc. E8-4711 Filed 3-7-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF69

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permit

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has made a preliminary determination that the subject Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) that would exempt Atlantic herring (herring) vessels from the Management Area 1A (Area 1A) herring trawl gear restriction period contains all the required information and warrants further consideration. The Regional Administrator has also made a preliminary determination that the activities authorized under the EFP would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made.

DATES: Comments on this document must be received on or before March 25, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is herring.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: "Comments on GMRI herring EFP." Written comments should be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, "Comments on GMRI herring EFP." Comments may also be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ryan Silva, Cooperative Research Program Specialist, phone: 978-281-9326, fax: 978-281-9135.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Pending final approval by NOAA's Grants Management Division, the Science Director for NMFS's Northeast Fisheries Science Center has preliminarily selected an Atlantic Herring Research Set Aside (RSA) proposal submitted by GMRI to conduct a study entitled: "Effects of Fishing on Herring Aggregations," which would assess the effects of midwater trawling on herring aggregations. GMRI proposes to survey a herring aggregation using acoustic sonar prior to, during, and following trawl fishing pressure. Due to concern that other fishing vessels, particularly other herring midwater trawl vessels, fishing in the study area could interfere with the survey, GMRI submitted an EFP application to conduct its research during the herring midwater trawl gear restriction period, as specified at 50 CFR 648.202(a) and detailed below, thereby ensuring midwater trawl vessels will not be fishing in the study area.

Amendment 1 to the FMP implemented a provision that vessels fishing for herring may not use, deploy, or fish with midwater trawl gear in Area 1A from June 1 through September 30. This measure was implemented due to concern about the potential impacts of midwater trawl fishing on the inshore Gulf of Maine (GOM) herring resource and other bycatch species. These concerns relate primarily to the importance of herring as a forage species for other fish, marine mammals, and seabirds, and the localized impact that midwater trawl fishing effort may have on schools of herring in nearshore areas. Additional concern was expressed by purse seine and weir fishers that midwater trawl gear may disperse herring schools and prevent herring schools from coming inshore, thereby limiting fishing opportunities for these respective gear types. Finally, data suggest there may be differences in the species composition of bycatch and mortality of bycatch between purse seine and midwater trawl gear. Therefore, restricting midwater trawl gear in Area 1A from June through October is intended to: (1) increase herring availability as forage for various fish, marine mammal, and seabird species; (2) improve fishing opportunities for purse seine and weir fishers; and (3) reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality resulting from midwater trawling in Area 1A. Technical reviewers and panelists for