

Dated: March 25, 2019.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG914

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Advisory Panel of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday, April 12, 2019, beginning at 9 a.m. and conclude by 3 p.m. For agenda details, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via webinar with a telephone-only audio connection: <http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/msb-ap-2019/>. Telephone instructions are provided upon connecting, or the public can call direct: 800-832-0736, Rm: *7833942#.

Council address: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N. State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674-2331 or on their website at www.mafmc.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, telephone: (302) 526-5255.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purposes of the meeting include: (1) To create a *Fishery Performance Report* by the Council's Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish (MSB) Advisory Panel. This report facilitates structured input from the Advisory Panel members for

the MSB specifications process for the Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC); and (2) Gather Advisory Panel feedback on the development of the Council's 2020-24 strategic plan, after reviewing the results of a recent strategic planning stakeholder survey. An agenda and background documents will be posted at the Council's website (www.mafmc.org) prior to the meeting.

Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aid should be directed to M. Jan Saunders, (302) 526-5251, at least 5 days prior to any meeting date.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG899

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 Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit application submitted by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. This Exempted Fishing Permit would exempt participating vessels from minimum fish size restrictions and fish possession limits. Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery

Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notice to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on Exempted Fishing Permit applications.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before April 15, 2019.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by either of the following methods:

- *Email:* nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on NEFSC Study Fleet EFP."

- *Mail:* Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on NEFSC Study Fleet EFP."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Spencer Talmage, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9232, Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Northeast Fisheries Science Center submitted a complete application for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) on February 26, 2019, for the 2019 Study Fleet Program. The EFP would exempt 18 commercial fishing vessels from the minimum size and possession limits for species of interest, as well as allow temporary retention of species that would be discarded.

The Center established the Study Fleet Program in 2002 to more fully characterize commercial fishing operations and provide sampling opportunities to augment NMFS's data collection programs. Partnership with the commercial fishing industry allows the Center to provide samples for stock assessment and fish biology research when traditional sampling sources might otherwise be unavailable. Table 1 includes all of the regulations specified at 50 CFR part 648 that participating vessels would be exempt from for at-sea sampling or when retaining and landing fish for research purposes. The exemptions listed in Table 1 are necessary for contracted vessels to acquire the biological samples needed to meet Center research objectives.

TABLE 1—SPECIFIC REGULATIONS COVERED BY THE PROPOSED EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT

	Study fleet program EFP
Number of Vessels	18.
Exempted regulations in 50 CFR part 648	Size limits: § 648.83 Northeast multispecies minimum sizes.
	Possession restrictions:
	§ 648.86(a) Haddock.
	§ 648.86(b) Atlantic cod.
	§ 648.86(d) Small-mesh multispecies.
	§ 648.86(g) Yellowtail flounder.