

language document on a worked example based on the Hydra operating model. They will also discuss and provide guidance on the framework and focus of public outreach workshops to be conducted during October to December. Other business will be discussed as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained on the agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: June 29, 2020.

**Rey Israel Marquez,**

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

[FR Doc. 2020-14308 Filed 7-1-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA250]

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public hearings via webinar.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council's is convening a Public Hearing of Draft Amendment 23 to Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan via webinar to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this

group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

**DATES:** This webinar will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2020, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** All meeting participants and interested parties can register to join the webinar for the July 16 webinar: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7740866831961614094>

**Council address:** New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**Meeting addresses:** The meeting will be held via webinar INFORMATION.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Public comments:** Mail to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill #2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Mark the outside of the envelope "DEIS for Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP". Comments may also be sent via fax to (978) 465-3116 or submitted via email to [comments@nefmc.org](mailto:comments@nefmc.org) with "DEIS for Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP" in the subject line.

#### Agenda

Scheduling of hearings is ongoing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional hearings will be announced in a separate notice. Council staff will brief the public on Draft Amendment 23 before receiving comments on the amendment. The hearing will begin promptly at the time indicated above. If all attendees who wish to do so have provided their comments prior to the end time indicated, the hearing may conclude early. To the extent possible, the Council may extend hearings beyond the end time indicated above to accommodate all attendees who wish to speak.

Although non-emergency issues not contained on the agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy

of the recording is available upon request.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: June 29, 2020.

**Rey Israel Marquez,**

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

[FR Doc. 2020-14309 Filed 7-1-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA256]

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

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a public meeting of the Council.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held Thursday, July 16, 2020, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For agenda details, see

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

**ADDRESSES:** Due to public health concerns related to the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's July meeting will be conducted by webinar only. Please see the Council's website ([www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)) for log-in procedures.

**Council address:** Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N State St., Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674-2331.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D. Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; telephone: (302) 526-5255. The Council's website, [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org) also has details on the proposed agenda, webinar connection, and briefing materials.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Agenda: Thursday, July 16, 2020

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will meet via webinar on July 16, 2020 to review

alternatives, related analyses, Committee recommendations, and take final action on the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish FMP Goals/Objectives, and *Illex* Permits Amendment. Details and briefing materials will be posted to <https://www.mafmc.org/briefing/july-2020>.

### 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 the meeting date.

(Authority: 16 U.S.C.1801 *et seq.*)

Dated: June 29, 2020.

**Rey Israel Marquez,**

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

[FR Doc. 2020-14307 Filed 7-1-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No. PTO-P-2020-0027]

#### Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program

**AGENCY:** United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is initiating the Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program to provide for the advancement of applications out of turn in ex parte appeals before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB). An appellant who has filed an ex parte appeal and received a notice that the appeal has been docketed may file a petition, accompanied by a petition fee, to expedite the review of his or her appeal. The Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program sets a target of reaching a decision on the ex parte appeal within six months from the date an appeal is entered into the Pilot Program.

**DATES:** *Applicability Date:* July 2, 2020. *Duration:* The Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program is offered on a temporary basis, and petitions to request inclusion of an ex parte appeal in the Pilot Program will be accepted until 500 appeals have been accorded fast-track status under the program, or until July 2, 2021, whichever occurs earlier. The USPTO may extend the Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program (with or without modification) on either a temporary or a permanent basis, or may discontinue the program

for either insufficient usage or after July 2, 2021.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steven Bartlett, Patent Trial and Appeal Board, by telephone at 571-272-9797, or by email at [fasttrackappeals@uspto.gov](mailto:fasttrackappeals@uspto.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Appeals to the PTAB are normally taken up for decision in the order in which they are docketed. *See* USPTO Standard Operating Procedure 1 (Sept. 20, 2018), available at <https://www.uspto.gov/patents-application-process/patent-trial-and-appeal-board/resources>. However, a small number of appeals are advanced out of turn due to a special status. For example, reexamination proceedings, which are handled by the USPTO with “special dispatch,” and reissue applications are treated as special throughout their pendency, including during appeal. *See* Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) 708.01. Applications that have been “made special” during examination through a petition based on the age or health of an applicant, or for other reasons listed in 37 CFR 1.102 (a)–(d), also maintain their special status through any appeal. *See* MPEP 1203(II). Furthermore, for the same reasons, an appellant may also petition the PTAB to have an application on appeal made special. *See id.* Currently, about 1.1% of appeals are given a special status through one of the above methods.

The America Invents Act created a mechanism for the prioritized examination of patent applications, which permits an applicant to advance an application out of turn (*i.e.*, accord special status) for examination by filing a request accompanied by the appropriate fees. *See* Changes to Implement the Prioritized Examination Track (Track I) of the Enhanced Examination Timing Control Procedures Under the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, 76 FR 59050 (Sept. 23, 2011) (Track I Notice). In view of the program’s popularity and high demand, the USPTO recently increased the yearly number of requests that may be granted from 10,000 to 12,000. *See* Increase of the Annual Limit on Accepted Requests for Track I Prioritized Examination, 84 FR 45907 (Sept. 3, 2019). In FY 2019, prioritized examination was granted for approximately 2.7% of the total number of applications filed. Prioritized examination status, however, does not carry through to any appeal from a final rejection. *See* 76 FR 59051.

In view of the success and popularity of prioritized examination, the PTAB is

adopting, on a temporary basis, the Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program, under which an appellant may have any ex parte appeal to the PTAB accorded fast-track status by filing a petition accompanied by a fee. Under the Pilot Program, the PTAB will endeavor to issue a decision on an ex parte appeal within six months from the date the appeal is entered into the program. Currently, the average appeal pendency is about 15 months. *See* PTAB Statistics, available at <https://www.uspto.gov/patents-application-process/patent-trial-and-appeal-board/statistics>. Thus, fast-track decisions on ex parte appeals under this Pilot Program may hasten patentability determinations on new inventions and the pace at which products or services embodying these inventions are brought to the marketplace, thus spurring follow-on innovation, economic growth, and job creation.

The Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program will accept petitions for advancing out of turn and according fast-track status to ex parte appeals for up to one year from the effective date of the program or until 500 appeals have been accorded fast-track status under the program, whichever occurs earlier. The threshold of 500 granted petitions corresponds to approximately 8% of the total number of new appeals received in the average fiscal year and was chosen in accordance with maintaining the PTAB’s overall decision pendency goals.

The USPTO will evaluate the Pilot Program at the conclusion of this one-year period or 500-appeal threshold to determine if it should be made permanent. Likewise, the USPTO will consider what changes, if any, would be required to provide a sustainable mechanism for some number of ex parte appeals to be advanced out of turn without adversely affecting the timeliness of providing decisions on the other appeals before the PTAB.

If the USPTO finds that the Fast-Track Appeals Pilot Program adversely impacts the pendency of other appeals at any point in time during the program’s operation, then the USPTO may modify or terminate the Pilot Program. Moreover, if the Pilot Program is not sufficiently used, it may be modified or terminated.

#### Requirements for Entry Into the Pilot Program

The PTAB will accord fast-track status to a pending ex parte appeal in accordance with the following conditions:

(1) The application must be an original utility, design, or plant