

an additional 15 days for public comments when (1) up to another year of identical or nearly identical activities as described in the Description of Proposed Activities section of this notice is planned or (2) the activities as described in the Description of Proposed Activities section of this notice would not be completed by the time the IHA expires and a renewal would allow for completion of the activities beyond that described in the *Dates and Duration* section of this notice, provided all of the following conditions are met:

(1) A request for renewal is received no later than 60 days prior to the needed Renewal IHA effective date (recognizing that the Renewal IHA expiration date cannot extend beyond one year from expiration of the initial IHA).

(2) The request for renewal must include the following:

- An explanation that the activities to be conducted under the requested Renewal IHA are identical to the activities analyzed under the initial IHA, are a subset of the activities, or include changes so minor (*e.g.*, reduction in pile size) that the changes do not affect the previous analyses, mitigation and monitoring requirements, or take estimates (with the exception of reducing the type or amount of take).

- A preliminary monitoring report showing the results of the required monitoring to date and an explanation showing that the monitoring results do not indicate impacts of a scale or nature not previously analyzed or authorized.

(3) Upon review of the request for renewal, the status of the affected species or stocks, and any other pertinent information, NMFS determines that there are no more than minor changes in the activities, the mitigation and monitoring measures will remain the same and appropriate, and the findings in the initial IHA remain valid.

Dated: January 3, 2022.

**Kimberly Damon-Randall,**

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XB697]

#### Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Pacific Council) Groundfish Subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will hold an online meeting to review the 2021 groundfish stock assessment process and discuss process improvements for the next stock assessment cycle.

**DATES:** The online meeting will be held Tuesday, January 25, 2022, from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Pacific Standard Time (PST) or until business for the day is completed.

**ADDRESSES:** This meeting will be held online. Specific meeting information, including directions on how to join the meeting and system requirements will be provided in the meeting announcement on the Pacific Council's website (see [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)). You may send an email to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt ([kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov](mailto:kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov)) or contact him at (503) 820-2412 for technical assistance.

*Council address:* Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** John DeVore, Staff Officer, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820-2413.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Participants in the Pacific Council's 2021 groundfish stock assessment process will hold a meeting via webinar to review and evaluate the 2021 stock assessment review (STAR) process. The goal of the webinar is to solicit process improvements to recommend for future groundfish stock assessments and STAR panel reviews. Process recommendations will be provided to the Pacific Council at their March 2022 meeting.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may be discussed, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this document that

require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the intent to take final action to address the emergency.

#### Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt ([kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov](mailto:kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov); (503) 820-2412) at least 10 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: January 3, 2022.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2022-00040 Filed 1-5-22; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No. PTO-P-2021-0033]

#### Deferred Subject Matter Eligibility Response Pilot Program

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO or Office) is implementing a pilot program to evaluate the effects of permitting applicants to defer responding to subject matter eligibility (SME) rejections in certain patent applications. Under this pilot program, applicants may receive invitations to participate if their applications meet the criteria for the program as specified in this notice, including a criterion that the claims in the application necessitate rejections on SME and other patentability-related grounds. An applicant who accepts the invitation to participate in this pilot program must still file a reply to every Office action mailed in the application, but is permitted to defer responding to SME rejections until the earlier of final disposition of the application, or the withdrawal or obviation of all other outstanding rejections. This notice outlines the conditions, eligibility requirements, and guidelines of the pilot program.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 7, 2022 to ensure consideration.

*Pilot Duration:* Invitations to participate in the Deferred Subject Matter Eligibility Response (DSMER) Pilot Program will be mailed during the