

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Fishery Capacity Reduction Program/Buyback Requests**

AGENCY: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of information collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before July 15, 2024.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0376 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Moni Banerjee, Chief, Financial Services Division, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, (301) 427–8716 or moni.banerjee@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Abstract**

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection. The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) amended the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) to provide for voluntary reduction of excess fishing capacity through fishing capacity reduction (buyback) programs. Excess fishing capacity decreases fisheries earnings, complicates fishery management, and imperils fishery conservation. The statutory objective of a program is “to obtain the maximum

sustained reduction in fishing capacity at the least cost and in a minimum period of time.” Buybacks pay fishermen either to: (1) Surrender their fishing permits; or (2) both surrender their permits and either scrap their fishing vessels or restrict vessel title to prevent fishing. Buybacks can involve either a Federal or State fishery. Buybacks can be funded via a long-term loan from the Federal government to the fishery (industry-funded buybacks), to be repaid by the industry by post-buyback landing fees, or funded from appropriations (non-industry funded) or other non-loan sources of funds. Programs involving industry-financed loans are authorized by section 1111 of title XI of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) established programs to reduce excess fishing capacity by paying fishermen to surrender their vessels/permits. The information collected by NMFS involves the submission of buyback requests by industry, submission of bids, referenda of fishery participants and reporting of collection of fees to repay buyback loans. For buybacks involving State-managed fisheries, the State may be involved in developing the buyback plan and complying with other information requirements. NMFS requests information from participating buyback participants to track repayments of the loans as well as ensure accurate management and monitoring of the loans. The fees for recordkeeping and reporting requirements at 50 CFR parts 600.1013 through 600.1017 form the basis for the collection of information.

II. Method of Collection

Paper reports or electronic reports are required from buyback participants. Methods of submittal include mailing of paper reports, electronic submission via the internet.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0376.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission. [Extension of a current information collection.]

Affected Public: Individuals or households; business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 200.

Estimated Time per Response: Implementation plan, 6,634 hours; referenda votes, bids, seller/buyer reports and annual fee collection reports, 4 hours each; completion of fish ticket, 10 minutes; monthly fee collection report, 2 hours; advising

holder/owner of conflict with accepted bidders' representations, 1 hour; potentially 270 hours-state approval/review of plans.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 15,838.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$1,596 in recordkeeping/filing costs.

Respondent's Obligation: Required to Obtain or Retain Benefits.

Legal Authority: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act.

IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Sheleen Dumas,

Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Commerce Department.

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