

Dated: May 19, 1998.

Robert E. Hebner,

Acting Deputy Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Institute of Standards and Technology

Judges Panel of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

AGENCY: National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of closed meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. app. 2, notice is hereby given that there will be a closed meeting of the Judges Panel of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award on Tuesday, June 9, 1998. The Judges Panel is composed of nine members prominent in the field of quality management and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The purpose of this meeting is to review final judging interaction, survey of applicants and judging process improvement discussions, and to begin the review process of the 1998 Award applicants to be recommended as Award winners. The applications under review contain trade secrets and proprietary commercial information submitted to the Government in confidence.

DATES: The meeting will convene June 9, 1998, at 8:30 a.m. and adjourn at 3:00 p.m. on June 9, 1998. The entire meeting will be closed.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Administration Building Conference Room, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Harry Hertz, Director, National Quality Program, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899, telephone number (301) 975-2361.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Assistant Secretary for Administration, with the concurrence of the General Counsel, formally determined on May 19, 1998, that the meeting of the Judges Panel will be closed pursuant to Section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. app. 2, as amended by Section 5(c) of the Government in the Sunshine Act, Pub. L. 94-409. The meeting, which involves examination of records and discussion of Award applicant data, may be closed to the public in accordance with Section

552b(c)(4) of Title 5, United States Code, since the meeting is likely to disclose trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential.

Dated: May 19, 1998.

Robert E. Hebner,

Acting Deputy Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 980324076-8076-01; I.D. 031798B]

RIN 0648-ZA38

Halibut and Sablefish Fisheries Quota-Share Loan Program; Final Program Notice and Announcement of Availability of Federal Assistance

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

ACTION: Announcement of availability of Federal assistance.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the availability of long-term loans for financing or refinancing the purchase cost of quota share (QS) in the halibut and sablefish fisheries off Alaska. Only entry-level fishermen or fishermen who fish from small vessels are eligible for these loans.

DATES: NMFS will accept applications only during an application open season. The application open season will begin on June 10, 1998 and will end on June 24, 1998. All loan funds available for FY 1998 must be committed before September 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Applicants should send loan applications to the Northwest Financial Services Branch, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE (BIN C15700), Building No. 1, Seattle, WA 98115.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kimberly Berryhill at (206) 526-6122 (voice) or (206) 526-6306 (facsimile).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Introduction

A. Background

The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) (P.L. 104-297) amended section 1104A(a)(7) of Title XI of the Merchant Marine Act (46 U.S.C. App. 1274) and

section 303(d)(4) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) to authorize financing and refinancing the cost of entry-level fishermen and fishermen who fish from small boats purchasing individual fishing quota (IFQ).

Although the SFA indicates that loans are available for purchasing IFQ, the basic fishing permit for the halibut and sablefish fisheries is termed "QS" rather than "IFQ." In these fisheries, IFQ is an annual allocation of the pounds of fish that each QS holder may harvest. Consequently, NMFS interprets the SFA to allow loans for the cost of purchasing basic fishing permits rather than annual harvest allocations under those permits. These loans will finance the purchase of halibut and sablefish QS rather than IFQ.

Title XI of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936, is the credit authority under which NMFS will make these loans. This authority is subject to the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (FCRA) (2 U.S.C. 661). This Act requires estimated net loan losses (FCRA cost) to be appropriated in cash at the time Congress authorizes annual loan ceilings.

FY 1998 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Commerce included a \$100,000 advance to fund the FCRA cost of this loan program during its first year (from October 1, 1997, through September 30, 1998).

The amount of annual FCRA credit authority available is a ratio of the FCRA cost rate and the FCRA cost appropriated. NMFS preliminarily estimates the FCRA cost rate of these loans to be 2 percent. Consequently, the \$100,000 appropriated for this loan program's FY 1998 FCRA cost will preliminarily support a \$5,000,000 credit authority (\$5,000,000 times 0.2 equals \$100,000).

The FY 1998 credit authority may not support more than 20 to 35 loans. FY 1998 loan demand will most likely exceed supply. NMFS will, to the maximum extent possible, process loan applications (up to the maximum FY 1998 credit authority available) in the order in which applicants submit them during an application open season. For the specific dates upon which the application open season begins and ends, see the DATES heading at the beginning of this document. All applications must be submitted by first-class U.S. mail. No other form of application submission is acceptable. To reduce the open-season paperwork burden, applicants need complete only a small portion (Section A) of the