

622.514(a)(2)) for data collection. A maximum of 120 red hind would be harvested under the EFP. The applicant is seeking to gather life history information (e.g., age, growth, reproduction) that could be used in future stock assessments for red hind, which provide guidance and management recommendations specific to this species for NMFS, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, and the U.S. Virgin Islands' Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The applicant was awarded funding through the Cooperative Research Program to complete critical gaps in red hind population demographics and life history in preparation for upcoming stock assessments in the U.S. Caribbean. In addition to collecting life history information for the species, the project aims to evaluate current Federal area and seasonal closures that protect red hind spawning aggregations through replication of previous sampling collections and analysis of temporal trends related to size-at-age, sex ratios, and size and age frequency distributions for red hind during spawning events. By targeting red hind spawning aggregations, the applicant will be better able to collect data that currently is not readily available on larger sized fish. Data collected from this project would be made available for use in future stock assessments for red hind in St. Croix and St. Thomas and St. John, which are tentatively scheduled for late 2025 and 2026.

Red hind would be collected by researchers and commercial fishermen aboard contracted commercial fishing vessels. If granted, the EFP would exempt project participants from area and seasonal closure regulations codified at 50 CFR 622.479(a)(2) (St. Croix) and 50 CFR 622.514(a)(2) (St. Thomas and St. John), as identified and described below. Pending issuance, the EFP would be expected to be effective from December 1, 2024, through March 1, 2025. The EFP would only apply to the captains and vessels that are selected to be a part of the project. Therefore, Fish/Fisheries Conservation Lab at the University of South Carolina would be able to account for and provide NMFS with a list of participants (e.g., state license, registration of each vessel and vessel name during designated fishing trips, name of participants and contact information, etc.) to be covered under the EFP before the project begins.

Activities under the EFP would consist of harvesting 60 red hind from the Lang Bank site east of St. Croix during the 4 days around the full moon for the months of January 2025 and

February 2025, and 60 red hind from the MCD site south of St. Thomas during the 4 days around the full moon for the months of December 2024 and January 2025. During each sampling event (i.e., fishing day), commercial fishermen would use a maximum of four fishing rods, each with up to three hooks. All activities (a maximum of 16 fishing days) would occur in Federal waters, from depths of 82 to 246 feet (25 to 75 meters), while adrift (i.e., no anchoring would occur). Once the 60 red hind are obtained from each site, fishing activities would end.

The applicant would only target red hind. All other catch would be returned to the water using a descending device, if necessary, to ensure minimum harm. A total of 120 red hind would be retained under the EFP. Samples would be stored on ice and transported to a field lab. For each sample, the applicants would record standard length, fork length, and total length (to the nearest millimeter) and weight (to the nearest gram). Otoliths would be removed, rinsed, and stored for further processing. Gonads would be removed, weighed, and preserved. Eyes, muscle, stomachs, and fin clips would be collected and archived for future research on trophic ecology and population genomics.

Under the EFP, the applicant would be exempt from the closure regulations and allowed to fish for and harvest red hind in or from the (1) red hind spawning aggregation area east of St. Croix during the closure from December 1 through last day of February (50 CFR 622.479(a)(2)) and (2) Hind Bank Marine Conservation District closed area (50 CFR 622.514(a)(2)). A maximum of 8 fishing trips would occur in each site, 16 total during the project.

NMFS finds this application warrants further consideration based on a preliminary review. Possible conditions the agency may impose on the EFP, if granted, include but are not limited to, a prohibition on fishing within marine protected areas, marine sanctuaries, or special management zones without additional authorization, and requiring compliance with best practices in the event of interactions with any protected species.

A final decision on issuance of the EFP will depend on NMFS' review of public comments received on the application, consultations with appropriate fishery management agencies of the affected states, the Council, and the U.S. Coast Guard, and a determination that the activities to be taken under the EFP are consistent with all other applicable laws.

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

Dated: November 6, 2024.

Karen H. Abrams,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XE455]

Permits; Foreign Fishing

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

ACTION: Notice of application for transshipment permit; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS publishes for public review and comment information regarding a permit application for transshipment of farmed salmon from aquaculture operations in Maine waters to processing plants in Canada by Canadian flagged vessels. The application for a transshipment permit is submitted under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). This action is necessary for NMFS to make a determination on whether to approve the permit application.

DATES: Written comments must be received by November 27, 2024.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on this action, identified by RTID 0648-XE455 should be sent to Jasmine Prat in the NMFS Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce by email at jasmine.prat@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jasmine Prat by email at jasmine.prat@noaa.gov, or by phone at 301-956-5472.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 1824(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1824(d)) authorizes the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) to issue a transshipment permit for a vessel other than a vessel of the United States to engage in fishing consisting solely of transporting fish or fish products at sea from a point within the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) or, with the concurrence of a state, within the boundaries of that state, to a point outside the United States.

Section 1824(d)(3)(D) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act provides that an

application to transship from U.S. waters to another country using non-U.S. vessels may not be approved until the Secretary determines that no owner or operator of a vessel of the United States which has adequate capacity to perform the transportation for which the application is submitted has indicated an interest in performing the transportation at fair and reasonable rates. NMFS is publishing this notice as part of its effort to make such a determination with respect to the application described below.

Summary of Application

NMFS received an application from True North Salmon Limited Partnership, Kelly Cove Salmon Limited, and 697002 NB, Inc., requesting authorization to transfer salmon from U.S. farm pens in Maine waters to 5 Canadian vessels for the purpose of transporting the salmon to Blacks Harbour, Canada for processing. The transshipment operations will occur within the boundaries of the State of Maine, and within 12 nautical miles from Maine's seaward boundary. NMFS issued permits for the same vessels for use in calendar year 2024. Those permits expire December 31, 2024.

Dated: November 7, 2024.

Alexa Cole,

Director, Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2024-26293 Filed 11-12-24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Establishment of the Ocean Acidification Advisory Board and Solicitation of Nominations for Membership

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

ACTION: Notice of establishment of the Ocean Acidification Advisory Board and solicitation of nominations for membership.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 10644(6) of the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act and in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, the Administrator of NOAA and the Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (SOST) announce the establishment of the Ocean Acidification Advisory Board (OAAB). The OAAB shall provide

independent advice and recommendations to the Interagency Working Group on Ocean Acidification (IWG-OA) and the SOST on matters related to Federal activities on ocean and coastal acidification, including understanding impacts and developing mitigation techniques for ecosystems and human communities. This notice also requests nominations for membership on the OAAB.

DATES: Nominations should be sent to the web address specified below and must be received no more than 120 days after publication of this notice on March 18th, 2025. This solicitation notice shall remain open for two years; NOAA will continue to accept applications after 120 days past the publication of this notice in case there are vacancies.

ADDRESSES: Nominations and applications should be submitted electronically to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), OAAB, NOAA, at dwright.gledhill@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dwight Gledhill, DFO, OAAB, NOAA, at 301-734-1288 or dwright.gledhill@noaa.gov in the Ocean Acidification Program Office, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background and Authority

Establishment of the OAAB implements a statutory requirement of the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, Public Law 117-167, sec. 10644(6), 33 U.S.C. 3703(c). The OAAB is governed by the FACA, which sets forth standards for the formation and use of advisory committees. The OAAB's responsibilities include the following: (1) Advise the SOST and IWG-OA on Federal research, monitoring, and outreach activities related to ocean and coastal acidification, and on efforts to coordinate these activities among agencies; (2) Review and make recommendations to the SOST on the IWG-OA's biennial reports, strategic research plan, and ocean chemistry coastal community vulnerability assessments; (3) Advise the SOST and IWG-OA on the best practices for data management and archiving standards for ocean and coastal acidification data; and (4) Maintain mechanisms for engagement and coordination with Tribal governments. The OAAB Chair shall brief the SOST and IWG-OA on the progress of the OAAB as necessary or at the request of the SOST.

II. Structure

The OAAB shall consist of 25 members appointed by the Co-Chairs of the SOST, as follows per the statute's

requirements: (A) Two representatives of the shellfish, lobster, or crab industry; (B) One representative of the finfish industry; (C) One representative of seafood processors; (D) Three representatives from academia, including both natural and social sciences; (E) One representative of recreational fishing; (F) One representative of a relevant nongovernmental organization; (G) Six representatives from relevant State and local governments with policy or regulatory authorities related to ocean acidification and coastal acidification; (H) One representative from the Alaska Ocean Acidification Network or a subsequent entity that represents the same geographical region and has a similar purpose; (I) One representative from the California Current Acidification Network or a subsequent entity that represents the same geographical region and has a similar purpose; (J) One representative from the Northeast Coastal Acidification Network or a subsequent entity that represents the same geographical region and has a similar purpose; (K) One representative from the Southeast Coastal Acidification Network or a subsequent entity that represents the same geographical region and has a similar purpose; (L) One representative from the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Acidification Network or a subsequent entity that represents the same geographical region and has a similar purpose; (M) One representative from the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Acidification Network or a subsequent entity that represents the same geographical region and has a similar purpose; (N) One representative from the Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System or a subsequent entity that represents the island territories and possessions of the United States in the Pacific Ocean, and the State of Hawaii and has a similar purpose; (O) One representative from the Caribbean Regional Association for Coastal Ocean Observing or a subsequent entity that represents Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands and has a similar purpose; (P) One representative from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Olympic Coast Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site or a subsequent entity that represents the same geographical representation; (Q) One representative from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Advisory Board without a vote.

Other than the NOAA ex-officio member, who will serve in the capacity as a Regular Government Employee