

National Streams and Rivers Assessment. This EPA-sponsored survey uses a random sampling design to estimate the health (in terms of water quality and other physical and biological parameters) of streams and rivers around the region and nation. The fish portion of the project looks at species assemblage as an indicator of a system's overall ecological integrity, evaluates presence of invasive fish species, and evaluates toxic contamination of fish tissue. Field work is planned for this project in 2014 and possibly future years and may involve as many as 60 sites. (2) Oregon Toxics Monitoring Program. This program looks at a range of pollutants in water, river sediments, and fish tissues—including current use and legacy pesticides, estrogenic compounds, pharmaceutical and personal care products, metals, and industrial chemicals such as PCBs, dioxins and furans. The species targeted for this work are typically bass and pikeminnow. Survey sites are typically at the downstream portion of larger rivers and tributaries. This work may involve as many as 20 sites per year. (3) Basins Biological Assessments. The DEQ is developing a monitoring program that looks at a range of environmental health indicators (such as fish species) on a basin scale. This work would feed into that effort. (4) Mixing Zone Surveys. Mixing zones are sections of water bodies downstream of municipal and industrial effluent discharges. The DEQ occasionally monitors fish use and health within and outside mixing zones to evaluate how effectively waste treatment protocols and processes are protecting the environment. Mixing zones are typically found in larger rivers. This work may involve as many as 10 sites per year. (5) Spill impact and cleanup effectiveness evaluations. The DEQ occasionally studies water bodies that have received toxic spills. These surveys could potentially occur in any state water body and could involve as many as five sites per year.

The work would benefit fish in a number of different ways—from helping evaluate watershed health to generating information on contaminant concentrations to determining if current water quality protection regulations and methods are sufficiently effective. The DEQ researchers would capture fish using a variety of methods: boat- and backpack electrofishing, hook-and-line angling, and seines. No drugs or anesthesia would be used on the captured fish. The fish would be held very briefly and, except for brief

transfers and some minimal measuring and weighing, the animals would not be handled out of water. All fish would be returned to the capture sites as quickly as possible. The researchers do not intend to kill any listed salmonids, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA. NMFS will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA and Federal regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made until after the end of the 30-day comment period. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: May 5, 2014.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD265

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS (Assistant Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. This EFP would allow commercial fishing vessels from the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance to possess and land barndoor skate, a prohibited species, for the purpose of collecting scientific data on barndoor skate and investigate a premium market for barndoor skate seafood products. Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 23, 2014.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* NMFS.GAR.EFP@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on Barndoor Skate EFP."

- *Mail:* John K. Bullard, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on Barndoor Skate EFP."

- *Fax:* (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Carly Bari, Fisheries Management Specialist, 978-281-9224, *carly.bari@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance submitted a complete application for an EFP on April 11, 2014. The EFP would authorize 14 vessels to possess and land barndoor skate, which would otherwise be prohibited in accordance with 50 CFR 648.322(e)(1).

The project entitled "Research into life history characteristics, catch composition, and fishing mortality of barndoor skate (*Dipturus laevis*) in existing non-directed gillnet fisheries and initial analysis and development of market for barndoor skate seafood products," would allow fishermen to retain barndoor skate on their Northeast multispecies and monkfish fishing trips to obtain scientific data including where and when barndoor skates are caught, collect barndoor skate length, weight, and sex data, and collect fish health condition data. In addition, vessels would have restricted authorization to land barndoor skate to evaluate if a premium market can be developed for barndoor skate seafood products (primarily wings).

There has been increasing evidence in the Northeast Fisheries Science Center trawl surveys and observed discard data that barndoor skate populations have been recovering. However, the stock is not yet rebuilt. The applicant has requested the exemption to improve the understanding of the barndoor skate resource, and to investigate a premium barndoor skate market without increasing barndoor skate mortality.

Data would be collected by participating vessels using gillnet gear for at least 25 trips during each quarter of the fishing year. The study area would include the late winter/early spring fishing grounds in southern New England and the summer/fall fishing grounds on Georges Bank. All trips would take place in the following statistical areas: 521, 526, 533, 534, 537,

and 541. Biological data would be collected for the first 10 barndoor skate caught for each net hauled, and for the first 50 barndoor skate caught on each trip. For each haul on a research trip, participating vessels would document gear characteristics, haul time, location, depth, air temperature, estimated total catch, catch composition, as well as sex, length, and weight. In addition, a health index protocol developed for skates would be used to characterize the health of barndoor skates that are caught in an attempt to improve the understanding of barndoor skate mortality. A technician would accompany some of the trips to ensure consistency and accuracy of the data collected.

To evaluate a barndoor skate wing market, investigators would track barndoor and non-barndoor skate landings, ex-vessel price, and market volume on a quarterly basis. Efforts will also be made to develop or improve best handling practices to increase product quality and value. All intact barndoor skates, which have no significant visible gear-related trauma, would be measured and returned to the water as quickly as possible. Barndoor skates that are brought on-board moribund or with moderate or extensive trauma will be retained for sale commercially. The applicant states that authorization to land barndoor skates that are in poor condition, which would otherwise be discarded, will not increase the overall barndoor skate mortality. Vessels would be limited to 500 lb (227 kg) of barndoor skate wings (approximately 1,135 lb (515 kg) whole weight) per trip and they would need to be stored and sold separately from other skate products. Barndoor skates caught in excess of the possession limit would be discarded as soon as practicable. The project would be limited to a maximum weight of 168,000 lb (76.2 mt) of barndoor skate wing landings, an amount of barndoor skate deemed necessary to achieve the research objectives, while mitigating potential impacts to the barndoor skate resource.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: May 5, 2014.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Recruitment of First Responder Network Authority Board Members

AGENCY: National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) issues this Notice on behalf of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) as part of the annual process to seek expressions of interest from individuals who would like to serve on the FirstNet Board.¹ Four of the 12 appointments of non-permanent members to the FirstNet Board are expiring in August 2014. The Secretary of Commerce may reappoint individuals to serve on the FirstNet Board provided they have not served two consecutive full three-year terms.² NTIA issues this Notice to obtain expressions of interest in the event the Secretary must fill any vacancies arising on the Board. Expressions of interest will be accepted until May 23, 2014.

DATES: Expressions of Interest must be postmarked or electronically transmitted on or before May 23, 2014.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to submit expressions of interest as described below should send that information to: Stephen Fletcher, Associate Administrator of NTIA's Office of Public Safety Communications by email to FirstNetBoard@ntia.doc.gov; by U.S. mail or commercial delivery service to: Office of Public Safety Communications, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW., Room 7324, Washington, DC 20230; or by facsimile

¹ The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Act) created FirstNet as an independent authority within NTIA, directing it to establish a single nationwide interoperable broadband network. Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, Public Law 112-96, 126 Stat. 1561 ("Act"), to be codified at 47 U.S.C. 1401 *et. seq.* The Act requires that FirstNet be led by a 15-person Board, with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget serving as permanent members of the Board. 47 U.S.C. 1424(b)(1).

² 47 U.S.C. 1424(c)(2)(A)(ii).

transmission to (202) 501-0536. Please note that all material sent via the U.S. Postal Service (including "Overnight" or "Express Mail") is subject to delivery delays of up to two weeks due to mail security procedures.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Stephen Fletcher, Associate Administrator, Office of Public Safety Communications, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW., Room 7324, Washington, DC 20230; telephone: (202) 482-5802; email: sfletcher@ntia.doc.gov. Please direct media inquiries to NTIA's Office of Public Affairs, (202) 482-7002.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background and Authority

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Act) created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) as an independent authority within NTIA and charged it with establishing and overseeing a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network, based on a single, national network architecture.³ FirstNet is responsible for, at a minimum, ensuring nationwide standards for use and access of the network; issuing open, transparent, and competitive requests for proposals (RFPs) to build, operate, and maintain the network; encouraging these RFPs to leverage, to the maximum extent economically desirable, existing commercial wireless infrastructure to speed deployment of the network; and managing and overseeing contracts with non-federal entities to build, operate, and maintain the network.⁴ FirstNet holds the single public safety license granted for wireless public safety broadband deployment. The FirstNet Board is responsible for making strategic decisions about FirstNet's operations and ensuring the success of the nationwide network.

II. Structure

The FirstNet Board is composed of 15 voting members. The Act names the U.S. Attorney General, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security as permanent members of the Board. The Secretary of Commerce appoints the non-permanent members of the FirstNet Board.⁵ The Act requires each Board member to have experience or expertise in at least one of the following substantive areas: public safety, network, technical, and/or

³ 47 U.S.C. 1422(b).

⁴ 47 U.S.C. 1426(b)(1).

⁵ 47 U.S.C. 1424(b).