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## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

#### **Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; South Pacific Tuna Act**

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at [JJessup@doc.gov](mailto:JJessup@doc.gov)).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies

of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Tom Graham, (808) 725-5032 or tom.graham@noaa.gov.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **I. Abstract**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) collects vessel license, vessel registration, catch, and unloading information from operators of United States (U.S.) purse seine vessels fishing within a large region of the western and central Pacific Ocean, which is governed by the Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America. The Treaty, along with its annexes, schedules and implementing agreements, was signed in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in 1987. This collection of information is required to meet U.S. obligations under the Treaty.

The Treaty authorizes U.S. tuna vessels to fish within fishing zones of a large region of the Pacific Ocean. The South Pacific Tuna Act of 1988 (16 U.S.C. 973-973r) and U.S. implementing regulations (50 CFR part 300, subpart D) authorize the collection of information from participants in the Treaty fishery. Vessel operators who wish to participate in the Treaty Fishery must submit annual vessel license and registration (including registration of vessel monitoring system (VMS) units) applications and periodic written reports of catch and unloading of fish from licensed vessels. They are also required to ensure the continued operation of VMS units on board licensed vessels, which is expected to require periodic maintenance of the units.

The information collected is submitted to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) through the U.S. government, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The license and registration application information is used by the FFA to determine the operational capability and financial responsibility of a vessel operator interested in participating in the Treaty fishery. Information obtained from vessel catch and unloading reports is used by the FFA to assess fishing effort and fishery resources in the region and to track the amount of fish caught within each Pacific island state's exclusive economic zone for fair disbursement of Treaty monies. Maintenance of VMS units is needed to ensure the continuous operation of the VMS units, which, as part of the VMS administered by the FFA, are used as an enforcement tool. If the information is not collected, the U.S. government will not meet its obligations under the Treaty, and the lack of fishing information will result in poor management of the fishery resources.

## **II. Method of Collection**

All information should be submitted in hard copy via mail.

## **III. Data**

*OMB Control Number:* **0648-0218.**

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission (extension of a currently approved collection).

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 41.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* License application, 15 minutes; VMS registration application, 45 minutes; catch report, 1 hour; and unloading logsheet, 30 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 402.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$143,121 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

#### **IV. Request for Comments**

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 18, 2016.

Sarah Brabson,  
*NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.*

**BILLING CODE: 3510-22-S.**

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