



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR)

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

ACTION: Notice. 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 (insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER).

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 0648-0428 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 Gabrielle Aberle, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Regional Office, is requesting renewal of the currently approved information collection for the Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR).

The COAR is a State of Alaska report that is required to be completed and submitted by direct marketers, catcher processors, catcher exporters, buyer exporters, shore-based processors, and floating processor permit holders pursuant to Alaska Administrative Code (5 AAC 39.130) and 50 CFR 679. Under 50 CFR 679.5(p), NMFS requires motherships and catcher processors that are issued a Federal fisheries permit to annually complete and submit the appropriate sections of the COAR.

The COAR is used to gather statewide fish and shellfish information describing buying (ex-vessel) and production (wholesale or retail) activities. The information collected in the COAR is used to determine the value of Alaska's fisheries resources and products. NMFS uses the COAR database in annual Federal publications on the value of U.S. commercial fisheries, in the annual NMFS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports for the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska, and in periodic reports that describe the fisheries and that serve as reference documents to management agencies, the industry, and others.

The mothership and catcher processor data, when added to the COAR information collected from shoreside processors and stationary floating processors required under State of Alaska requirements, yield a complete database of equivalent annual product value information for all respective processing sectors. The information also provides a consistent time series according to which groundfish resources may be managed more efficiently. Use of the information generated by the COAR is coordinated between NMFS and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

The COAR must be submitted by April 1 to the ADF&G for the previous year's activity for all operations that are required to submit a COAR. NMFS requires the owner of a mothership

or catcher processor to annually complete and submit the appropriate forms of the COAR, whether the processor operated that year or not. If no receipt or production took place for that year, the owner submits only the COAR certification page.

The COAR requires submission of information on seafood purchasing, production, and both ex-vessel and wholesale values of seafood products. The buying information is reported by species, area of purchase, condition of fisheries resources at the time of purchase, type of gear used in the harvest, pounds purchased, and ex-vessel value. The ex-vessel value includes any post-season adjustments or bonuses paid after the fish was purchased. The production information is reported by species, area of processing, process type (e.g., frozen, canned, smoked), product type (e.g., fillets, surimi, sections), net weight of the processed product, and the first wholesale value.

II. Method of Collection

The COAR is available in fillable PDF, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel formats on the ADF&G Commercial Fish Reporting web page at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.coar> and may be emailed or printed and mailed to the ADF&G.

There is also a mechanism in eLandings (elandings.alaska.gov) that enables authorized users to generate a spreadsheet of data that includes their production information along with COAR reporting areas. This information can be used to verify production information that needs to be entered in the COAR, but is not a substitute for it. Instructions on how to generate COAR data from eLandings can be found on the same web page as the COAR form.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0428.

Form Number(s): 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: 98.

Estimated Time Per Response: Commercial Operator's Annual Report: 8 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 784 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$392.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

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 Chief Information Officer, Commerce

Department.

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