



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Alaska American Fisheries Act Reports

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

ACTION: Notice of information collection, 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 NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648-0401 in the subject line of your comments. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted on <https://www.regulations.gov> without change. 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 Doug Shaftel, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, doug.shaftel@noaa.gov; or by phone at 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This is a request for renewal of an approved information collection. The National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS), Alaska Region, is the sponsor of this information collection that contains American Fisheries Act (AFA) reporting requirements necessary for NMFS to manage the program and reduce salmon bycatch.

NMFS Alaska Region manages the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Management Area in the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prepared the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the BSAI Management Area (FMP) under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, and other applicable laws. Regulations implementing the FMP are at 50 CFR part 679.

The Bering Sea pollock fishery is managed under the AFA. The purpose of the AFA was to tighten U.S. ownership standards for U.S. fishing vessels under the Anti-Reflagging Act and to provide the Bering Sea pollock fleet the opportunity to conduct its fishery in a more rational manner while protecting non-AFA participants in the other fisheries. The AFA established sector allocations in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, determined eligible vessels and processors, allowed the formation of cooperatives, set limits on the participation of AFA vessels in other fisheries, and imposed special catch weighing and monitoring requirements on AFA vessels.

This information collection contains the annual and periodic reporting requirements for AFA cooperatives. These requirements include reports about on-going fishing operations of the cooperatives and reports focused on efforts to minimize salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. These reporting requirements are at 50 CFR 679.21 and 679.61.

This information is used to manage the Bering Sea pollock fishery, to evaluate the salmon bycatch management measures, and to provide the public with information about how the program operates and information about bycatch reduction under this program. This information collection provides the Council and NMFS with information about the organization and fishing

operations of the AFA cooperatives, allocations to the AFA cooperatives, and the effectiveness of the Chinook salmon and chum salmon bycatch management measures. This information is necessary to ensure long-term conservation and abundance of salmon and pollock, maintain a healthy marine ecosystem, and provide maximum benefit to fishermen and communities that depend on salmon and pollock.

II. Method of Collection

There are no forms associated with this information collection. The information is usually submitted by mail or email, and in an oral presentation to the Council.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0401.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a current information collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 11.

Estimated Time Per Response: AFA Cooperative Contract - 8 hours; Bering Sea Pollock Fishery Incentive Plan Agreement (IPA) - 50 hours; Bering Sea Pollock Fishery IPA Annual Report - 80 hours; IPA administrative appeals - 4 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 358 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$565 in recordkeeping and reporting costs.

Respondent's Obligation: Required to Obtain or Retain Benefits; Mandatory.

Legal Authority: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; American Fisheries Act.

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,

*Departmental PRA Compliance Officer, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs,
Commerce Department.*

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