

developed. They identified the following potentially significant impacts: (1) effects of fishing operations on essential fish habitat; (2) effects of fishing operations on protected species listed under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act and their critical habitat; and (3) effects on the sustainability of target and non-target fish stocks, and especially overfished groundfish stocks. Socioeconomic impacts are also considered in terms of the effect changes in projected harvests will have on the following groups of individuals: (1) Those who participate in harvesting the fishery resources and other living marine resources; (2) those who process and market fish and fish products; (3) those who are involved in allied support industries; (4) those who consume fish products; (5) those who rely on living marine resources in the management area, either for subsistence needs or for recreational benefits; (6) those who benefit from non-consumptive uses of living marine resources; (7) those involved in managing and monitoring fisheries; and (8) fishing communities.

#### Public Scoping Process

Two public scoping meetings will occur at the June 16–20, 2003, Council meeting as part of the Council's regular agenda. The meeting will take place at the Crown Plaza Hotel, 1221 Chess Drive, Foster City, CA. The first public scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 17, 2003, as part of agenda *B.4, Preliminary Range of Harvest Levels for 2004*. The second scoping meeting will be held on Friday, June 20, 2003, as part of agenda *B.14*,

*Adoption of Proposed Range of Alternatives for 2004 Groundfish Management Measures*. A public comment period is scheduled for each agenda and comments on the scope of the DEIS are encouraged during these comment periods. Because these scoping opportunities will occur as part of the regular agenda, the time at which they will begin depends on the agenda as a whole. Council business begins at 8 a.m. each day and usually ends not later than 5 p.m. A scoping document identifying the management issues, and an outline of the proposed analysis will be made available at the June 16–20, 2003 Council meeting and on the Council's Web site ([www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)). A full agenda and other information about this meeting is also available on this website or by request from Council offices (see **ADDRESSES** above).

NMFS invites comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis to be included in the DEIS. The scope includes the range of alternatives to be considered and potentially significant impacts to the human environment that should be evaluated in the DEIS. In addition, NMFS is notifying the public that, in conjunction with the Council, it is beginning a full environmental analysis and decision-making process for this proposal so that interested or affected people may know how they can participate in the environmental analysis and contribute to the final decision.

A DEIS will be prepared for comment later on in the process. The comment period on the DEIS environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection

Agency's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate at that time. To be the most helpful, comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or merits of the alternatives discussed. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the DEIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the DEIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the DEIS. (Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.) Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

#### Special Accommodations

These meetings are accessible to people with physical disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Carolyn Porter 503–820–2280 (voice) or 503–820–2299 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

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

Dated: May 30, 2003.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

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

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