

to the proposed rule included a detailed summary of the analyses contained in the IRFA, and that discussion is not repeated in its entirety here.

Statement of Objective and Need

A description of the reasons why this action is being considered, and the objectives of and legal basis for this action are contained in the preamble to the proposed rule and are not repeated here.

Summary of Significant Issues Raised in Public Comments

No public comments were received that related to the IRFA on this rule. Although 4 comments were received on the general economic impacts of the IR/IU program, these comments were not specific to the analyses contained in the IRFA. For a summary of the comments received, refer to the section above titled "Comments and Responses."

Description and Estimate of Number of Small Entities to Which the Rule Will Apply

A description and estimate of the number of small entities to which the rule will apply is provided in the IRFA and IRFA summary contained in the Classification section of the proposed rule and in the notice of additional supplementary information and is not repeated here. The final rule has been modified from the proposed rule and the FRFA includes an analysis of the approved alternative that would permanently mitigate the impacts of flatfish IR/IU upon small entities by removing all reference to flatfish IR/IU in the BSAI FMP and implementing regulations. The number of small entities to which the rule will apply has not been affected by these changes.

Description of Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Other Compliance Requirements

A description of projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements is provided in the IRFA and IRFA summary contained in the Classification section of the proposed rule and is not repeated here.

Steps Taken to Minimize Economic Impacts on Small Entities

Environmental impacts of the alternatives, including the Council's preferred Alternative and the Approved alternative, are expected to be insignificant based on the information and assessments are contained in Chapter 2 of the EA/RIR/FRFA. The Council's preferred alternative, and alternatives 1 through 4, would not have fully mitigated the adverse economic effects of IR/IU rules for flatfish on small entities because neither the Council nor the Secretary could guarantee that mitigating actions would have relieved the costs of full retention of IR/IU flatfish species by June 2004. The partial approval action of May 2003, will allow the benefits of the economic activity associated with these fisheries to accrue to vessel operators, crew and fishing communities, until the Council chooses to implement new IR/IU policies. Furthermore, the partial approval action will provide Council, industry, and the managing agencies time to develop measures that may meet bycatch reduction needs, while allowing the industry to continue to provide fishery benefits to the nation. A copy of this analysis is available from NMFS (see ADDRESSES).

Small Entity Compliance Guide

Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 states that, for each rule or group of related rules for which an agency is

required to prepare a FRFA, the agency shall publish one or more guides to assist small entities in complying with the rule, and shall designate such publications as "small entity compliance guides." The agency shall explain the actions a small entity is required to take to comply with a rule or group of rules. This paragraph serves as the small entity compliance guide. Small entities are not required to take any additional actions to comply with this action. This action does not require any additional compliance from small entities. Copies of this final rule are available from NMFS (see ADDRESSES) and at the following web site: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/>

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 679

Alaska, Fisheries, Recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

Dated: August 26, 2003.

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■ For the reasons set forth in the preamble, 50 CFR part 679 is amended as follows:

PART 679—FISHERIES OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE OFF ALASKA

■ 1. The authority citation for 50 CFR part 679 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, 1801 *et seq.*, and 3631 *et seq.*; Title II of Division C, Pub. L. 105–277; Sec. 3027, Pub. L. 106–31, 113 Stat. 57.

§ 679.27 [Amended]

■ 2. In § 679.27, paragraphs (b)(3) and (b)(4) are removed and paragraph (b)(5) is redesignated as (b)(3).

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