

from the NVCASE Program Manager at the contact information noted above. Further information for the evaluation process can be obtained from the NVCASE Program Handbook, NISTIR 6440; 2002 ED, available at <http://ts.nist.gov/nvcase>. The fees are estimated upon submission of the application on an individual basis. NIST will announce the recognition of qualified accreditation bodies on the NVCASE web site at <http://ts.nist.gov/nvcase>.

This notice contains a collection of information requirement subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. This collection of information has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the following control Number: 0693-0019. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

Dated: October 28, 2003.

Arden L. Bement, Jr.,

Director.

[FR Doc. 03-27606 Filed 11-3-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-13-U

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 030509119-3269-03; I.D. 103003B]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fishing Capacity Reduction Program; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; California, Washington, and Oregon Fisheries for Coastal Dungeness Crab and Pink Shrimp

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of fishing capacity reduction payment tender.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this notice to inform the public about tendering reduction payments under the Pacific

Coast groundfish fishing capacity reduction program. NMFS has accepted reduction bids. A successful referendum has approved the reduction loan repayment fees. NMFS is ready to tender reduction payments to accepted bidders.

ADDRESSES: Send questions about this notice to Michael L. Grable, Chief, Financial Services Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael L. Grable, (301) 713-2390.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Congress enacted the Pacific Coast groundfish fishing capacity reduction program ("program") on February 20, 2003. The program's objective is reducing the fishery's harvesting capacity. This helps financially stabilize this limited-entry fishery.

NMFS implemented the program by **Federal Register** notification. It published the initial notification on May 28, 2003 (68 FR 31653) and the final notification on July 18, 2003 (68 FR 42613). Persons wanting further program details should refer to these notifications.

This is a voluntary program. Program participants permanently relinquish their fishing permits. Their vessels can never fish again. The Program also involves the California, Washington, and Oregon fisheries for Dungeness crab and pink shrimp. Bidders who have these permits relinquish them along with their groundfish trawl permits.

The program's maximum cost is \$46 million. A 30-year loan finances \$36 million. Future fish landing fees repay the loan. Each of the seven fisheries involved pays fees at different rates. Congress appropriated the remaining \$10 million of the program's cost.

Groundfish permit holders bid for reduction payments. NMFS scores each bid amount against the bidder's past ex-vessel revenues. A reverse auction accepts bids whose amounts are the lowest percentages of revenues. This creates reduction contracts.

A referendum about the fees follows the bidding process. The reduction contracts become void unless the

majority of votes cast in the referendum approve the fees. All seven fisheries vote in the referendum. A statutory formula assigns different weights to each fishery's votes.

II. Present Status

NMFS invited program bids on July 18, 2003. The bidding period opened on August 4, 2003, and closed on August 29, 2003. One hundred eight groundfish permit owners submitted bids. These totaled \$59,786,471. NMFS accepted 92 bids. These totaled \$45,752,471. The next lowest scoring bid would have exceeded the program's maximum cost. The accepted bids involved 92 fishing vessels as well as 240 fishing permits. Ninety two of the permits were groundfish trawl permits. One hundred twenty one were crab and shrimp permits. The remaining 27 were other Federal permits.

NMFS mailed ballots to referendum voters on September 30, 2003. The voting period opened on October 15, 2003. It closed on October 29, 2003. NMFS received 1,105 timely votes. After weighting, 85.85 percent of the votes approved the fees. The referendum was successful. The reduction contracts are in full force and effect.

III. Purpose

NMFS publishes this notification to inform the public before tendering reduction payments to the 92 accepted bidders. On December 4, 2003, accepted bidders must permanently stop all further fishing with the reduction vessels and permits. NMFS will revoke the relinquished Federal permits. NMFS will advise California, Oregon, and Washington about the relinquished state permits. NMFS will notify the National Vessel Documentation Center to revoke the reduction vessels' fisheries endorsement. NMFS will also notify the U.S. Maritime Administration to restrict these vessels' transfer to foreign ownership or registry.

This notification begins the 30-day period and puts the public (including vessel or permit creditors) on notice. See the adjacent table for accepted bidders, vessels, and permits.

IV. Accepted Bidders, Vessels, and Permits

Accepted bidder	Vessel		Permit	
	Name	Official No.	Fishery	Number
AMBITION, INC	EUROCLYDON	913987	ENDORSEMENT WITH TRAWL GEAR in NWR.	GF0636
AMBITION, INC	EUROCLYDON	913987	SHRIMP in CA	41581
AMBITION, INC	EUROCLYDON	913987	SHRIMP in OR	90107
AMBITION, INC	EUROCLYDON	913987	SHRIMP in WA	57343