

than 75 days after the date of issuance of this preliminary determination.

This determination is issued and published in accordance with sections 733(f) and 777(i)(1) of the Tariff Act.

Dated: December 16, 2003.

James Jochum,

Assistant Secretary for Import Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 032801B]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fishing Capacity Reduction Program; Crab Species Covered by the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs

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

ACTION: Notice of qualifying bidders and voters.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this notice to inform the public of persons who prospectively qualify to bid, vote, or both in the fishing capacity reduction program for the crab species covered by the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands king and tanner crabs.

DATES: Comments may be submitted on or before January 21, 2004.

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

Any person who wants to contact NMFS' Restricted Access Management

Program (which issues crab species licenses) may do so at this address: Restricted Access Management Program, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. General

Section 144(d) of Division B of Public Law 106-554, as amended, authorized this fishing capacity reduction program. The program's objective is reducing harvesting capacity in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab fishery. This will help financially stabilize this limited-entry fishery and manage its fish.

This is a voluntary program. In exchange for reduction payments, program participants will permanently relinquish their fishing licenses and their fishing vessels' catch histories and fishing privileges.

The program's maximum cost cannot exceed \$100 million. A 30-year loan will finance 100 percent of whatever the cost turns out to be. Future crab landing fees will repay the loan.

In summary, the program will proceed as follows.

NMFS will publish an invitation to bid in a **Federal Register** notification, along with a bidding form and terms of capacity reduction agreement. This notification will specify bid opening and closing dates. NMFS will mail a bidding package to each person then on the qualifying bidder list. Qualified bidders will bid, along with co-bidders where appropriate. NMFS will score each bid amount against the bidder's past ex-vessel revenues during a bid scoring period. NMFS will, in a reverse auction, then accept bids whose amounts are the lowest percentages of the revenues. This will create reduction contracts.

Next, NMFS will conduct a referendum about the loan repayment fees. The reduction contracts will become inoperable unless at least two

thirds of the votes cast in this referendum approve the fees.

If the referendum is successful, NMFS will publish a 30-day reduction payment tender notification in the **Federal Register**. Afterwards, NMFS will tender reduction payments and complete the program.

NMFS published proposed program regulations on December 12, 2002 (67 FR 76329). It published final program regulations on December 12, 2003 (68 FR 69331). Interested persons should review these for further program details.

The final regulations require NMFS to publish this notification before inviting bids. Any person who wants to comment about this notification may do so prior to January 21, 2004. Comments may address:

- (1) Persons who appear on a list but should not,
- (2) Persons who do not appear on a list but should,
- (3) Persons whose names and/or business mailing addresses are incorrect, and
- (4) Any other pertinent matter.

NMFS will update the lists, as necessary, immediately before using them either for mailing invitations to bid or referendum ballots. Mailed invitations and ballots will be accompanied by NMFS' detailed bidding and voting guidance.

The difference between the qualifying bidder list and the qualifying voter list is that the latter includes the holders of interim crab licenses and the former does not.

NMFS based these lists upon the Restricted Access Management Program's crab license holder records for holders which meet the requirements of 50 CFR 679.4(k)(5) as well as the requirements of the program's final regulations.

II. Qualifying bidder and voter lists

- (1) Qualifying bidder List:

QUALIFYING BIDDERS

NAME	MAILING ADDRESS	NON-INTERIM CRAB LICENSE NO.
57 DEGREES NORTH, LLC	1445 NW 56TH ST, SEATTLE, WA 98107	LLC3554
AIREDALE LLC	916 DELANEY ST, ANCHORAGE, AK 99501	LLC2275
ALASKA BOAT COMPANY	PO BOX 5030, SEATTLE, WA 98105	LLC2039
ALASKA CHALLENGER L.L.C.	PO BOX 5030, SEATTLE, WA 98105	LLC3667
ALASKA SEA, INC.	18509 8TH AVE NW, SEATTLE, WA 98177-3153	LLC1607
ALASKA SEAFOOD PRODUCERS, INC.	PO BOX 1027, NEWPORT, OR 97365	LLC2187
ALASKAN BEAUTY, LLC	C/O FMS INC, 620 SIXTH ST S, KIRKLAND, WA 98033.	LLC3301
ALEUTIAN BALLAD, INC.	112 HARRISON AVE, CENTRALIA, WA 98531	LLC3170
ALEUTIAN MARINER, LLC	5470 SHILSHOLE AVE NW, STE 410, SEATTLE, WA 98107.	LLC3587
ALEUTIAN SHELLFISH, INC.	PO BOX 17701, SEATTLE, WA 98107	LLC1971