

anticipate that the Committee will meet for up to five two-day sessions beginning in December 1999. If the Committee establishes working groups to support its work, additional meetings for the working groups may be necessary.

NHTSA intends to accept the Committee recommendations, keeping in mind its statutory authority and other legal requirements. In the event that the agency rejects any of the recommendations, the preamble to a NPRM addressing the issues that were the subject of the negotiations will explain the reasons for the rejection.

VI. Meeting Agenda

The first meeting of the negotiated rulemaking committee will begin at 10 a.m. on December 14, 1999, with consideration of Committee ground rules, procedures, and calendar.¹ The Committee will then address the specific issues that should be included in the negotiation and how data to support its deliberations will be developed. In addition, the Committee will consider whether to establish working groups to provide technical support and recommendations for specific aspects of the negotiations. The first meeting will conclude no later than 3 p.m. on December 15.

VII. Authority

5 U.S.C. 561 *et seq.*, delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on: November 19, 1999.

Stephen R. Kratzke,

Acting Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[I.D. 110899D]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Notice of public hearings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene public hearings to receive comments on a Draft Charter Vessel/Headboat Permit Moratorium Amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and to the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (Draft Amendment).

DATES: Written comments on the Draft Amendment will be accepted by the Gulf Council until January 3, 2000. The public hearings will be held in December. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times of the public hearings.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to and copies of the draft amendment are available from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301, North, Suite 1000, Tampa, Florida 33619, telephone: 813-228-2815. The public hearings will be held in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific locations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne Swingle, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the Gulf of Mexico region there are presently about 1,286 charter vessels and 91 headboats. This represents an estimated 32-percent increase in the number of charter vessels and a 6-percent decrease in the number headboats between 1988 and 1998. Additionally, the number of charter vessel trips has increased 187 percent between 1988 and 1997.

The Council is considering implementation of a temporary moratorium on the issuance of charter vessel/headboat permits to fish the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics (mackerel) fish. A moratorium, if adopted by the Council and approved and implemented by NMFS, would provide a basis for the development of a more comprehensive effort limitation program for this segment of the recreational fisheries that could provide better long-term fishing effort control.

The Draft Amendment considers seven features of the proposed moratorium: (1) The duration of the moratorium; (2) initial eligibility requirements for a permit; (3) permit transfers during the moratorium; (4) vessel size for permit transfer; (5) the reissuance of permits not renewed; (6) a permit appeal process; and (7) vessel reporting. At present, the Council suggests a preferred alternative

containing the following elements: (1) The establishment of a 3-year charter vessel/headboat permit moratorium; (2) an initial eligibility requirement according to which all persons holding charter vessel/headboat permits on September 16, 1999, are eligible; (3) the allowance of permit transfers during the moratorium between (a) vessels owned by the permit holder and (b) individuals without transfer of the vessel; and (4) NMFS's suspension of permits not renewed (or permanently revoked) during the moratorium.

The Council has not selected preferred alternatives for (1) vessel size restriction on permit transfers, (2) the appeals process under moratorium, or (3) vessel reporting requirements.

Time and Location for Public Hearings

Public hearings for the Draft Charter Vessel/Headboat Permit Moratorium Amendment will be held at the following locations, dates, and times. In addition, public testimony will be accepted at the Gulf Council meeting in Fort Walton Beach, Florida on January 19, 2000.

1. December 6, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Port Isabel Community Center, 213 Yturria, Port Isabel, TX 78578
2. December 6, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Harvey Government Center, 1200 Truman Avenue, Key West, FL 33040
3. December 7, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Port Aransas Civic Center Auditorium, 710 West Avenue A, Port Aransas, TX 78373
4. December 7, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Naples Depot Civic Cultural Center 1051 Fifth Avenue South, Naples, FL 34102
5. December 8, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Texas A&M Auditorium, 200 Seawolf Parkway, Galveston, TX 77553
6. December 8, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., City Hall Auditorium, 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, FL 33708
7. December 9, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Larose Regional Park, 2001 East 5th Street, Larose, LA 70373
8. Monday, December 13, 1999, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., J. L. Scott Marine Education Center & Aquarium, 115 East Beach Blvd., US Hwy. 90, Biloxi, MS 39530
9. December 14, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Hilton Beachfront Garden Inn, 23092 Perdido Beach Boulevard, Orange Beach, AL 36561
10. December 15, 1999, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Gulf Coast Community College, Student Union East Building, Gibson Lecture Hall (2nd Floor), 5230

¹NHTSA will publish a single notice of the schedule of all future meetings in the **Federal Register**, but will amend the notice through subsequent **Federal Register** notices if it becomes necessary to do so.

West Highway 98, Panama City, FL
32401

Copies of the Draft Amendment can
be obtained from the Council (see
ADDRESSES).

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically
accessible to people with disabilities.
Requests for sign language
interpretation or other auxiliary aids
should be directed to Anne Alford at the
Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by November
29, 1999.

Dated: November 19, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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