

action merely approves for the purpose of RCRA 4005(c) those existing State requirements.

Compliance With the Congressional Review Act

The Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 801, *et seq.*, as added by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, generally provides that before a rule may take effect, the agency promulgating the rule must submit a rule report, which includes a copy of the rule, to each house of the Congress and to the Comptroller General of the United States. EPA will submit a report containing today's document and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of today's action in the **Federal Register**. Today's action is not a "major rule" as defined by section 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

Compliance With the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA), Public Law 104-4, establishes requirements for federal agencies to assess the effects of their regulatory actions on state, local, and tribal governments and the private sector. Under section 202 of the UMRA, EPA generally must prepare a written statement, including a cost-benefit analysis, for proposed and final rules with "federal mandates" that may result in expenditures to state, local, and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or to the private sector, of \$100 million or more in any one year.

Before promulgating an EPA rule for which a written statement is needed, section 205 of the UMRA generally requires EPA to identify and consider a reasonable number of regulatory alternatives and adopt the least costly, most cost-effective or least burdensome alternative that achieves the objectives of the rule. The provisions of section 205 do not apply when they are inconsistent with applicable law. Moreover, section 205 allows EPA to adopt an alternative other than the least costly, most cost-effective or least burdensome alternative if the Administrator publishes with the final rule an explanation why that alternative was not adopted. Before EPA establishes any regulatory requirements that may significantly or uniquely affect small governments, including tribal governments, it must have developed under section 203 of the UMRA a small government agency plan. The plan must provide for notifying potentially affected small governments, enabling

officials of affected small governments to have meaningful and timely input in the development of EPA regulatory proposals with significant federal intergovernmental mandates, and informing, educating, and advising small governments on compliance with the regulatory requirements.

EPA has determined that section 202 and 205 requirements do not apply to today's action because this rule does not contain a federal mandate that may result in annual expenditures of \$100 million or more for State, local, and/or tribal governments in the aggregate, or the private sector. Costs to State, local and/or tribal governments already exist under the West Virginia program, and today's action does not impose any additional obligations on regulated entities. In fact, EPA's approval of state programs generally may reduce, not increase, compliance costs for the private sector. Further, as it applies to the State, this action does not impose a federal intergovernmental mandate because UMRA does not include duties arising from participation in a voluntary federal program.

The requirements of section 203 of UMRA also do not apply to today's action because this rule contains no regulatory requirements that might significantly or uniquely affect small governments. Although small governments may own or operate municipal solid waste landfills, they are already subject to the regulatory requirements under the existing State laws that are being approved by EPA, and, thus, are not subject to any additional significant or unique requirements by virtue of this program approval.

Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*, federal agencies must consider the paperwork burden imposed by any information request contained in a proposed rule or a final rule. This rule will not impose any information requirements upon the regulated community.

Compliance With the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act

Section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 ("NTTAA"), Public Law 104-113, section 12(d) (15 U.S.C. 272 note) directs EPA to use voluntary consensus standards in its regulatory activities unless to do so would be inconsistent with applicable law or otherwise impractical. Voluntary consensus standards are technical standards (e.g., materials specifications,

test methods, sampling procedures, and business practices) that are developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies. The NTTAA directs EPA to provide Congress, through OMB, explanations when the Agency decides not to use available and applicable voluntary consensus standards. This action does not involve technical standards. Therefore, EPA did not consider the use of any voluntary consensus standards.

Authority: This notice is issued under the authority of section 2002, 4005 and 4010(c) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6912, 6945 and 6949(a).

Dated:

Bradley M. Campbell,

Regional Administrator, Region III.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 000119015-0015-01; I.D. 010500A]

RIN 0648-AM32

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures for the Pollock Fisheries Off Alaska

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

ACTION: Emergency interim rule; extension of expiration date; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS extends the expiration date of an emergency interim rule that implemented reasonable and prudent alternatives to avoid the likelihood that the pollock fisheries off Alaska will jeopardize the continued existence of the western population of Steller sea lions, or adversely modify their critical habitat. The emergency interim rule that is effective from January 20, 2000, through July 19, 2000, is extended through December 31, 2000. This emergency action is necessary to continue to implement reasonable and prudent alternatives until permanent rulemaking is implemented.

DATES: The expiration date of the emergency interim rule published January 25, 2000 (65 FR 3892), is extended to December 31, 2000. Comments must be received by July 12, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be sent to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK, 99802, Attn: Lori Gravel, or delivered to room 401 of the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. Copies of the Biological Opinion (BiOp) on the pollock fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and the Atka mackerel fishery of the Aleutian Islands subarea, the Revised Final Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RFRPAs), and the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review prepared for the emergency interim rule may be obtained from the same address. The BiOp and the RFRPAs are also available on the Alaska Region home page at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov>. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or Internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shane Capron, 907-586-7228 or shane.capron@noaa.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS issued a BiOp dated December 3, 1998, and revised December 16, 1998, on the pollock fisheries of the BSAI and GOA, and the Atka mackerel fishery of the Aleutian Islands Subarea. The BiOp concluded that the BSAI and GOA

pollock trawl fisheries, as previously prosecuted, were likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the western population of Steller sea lions, and adversely modify its critical habitat.

The BiOp concluded that, to avoid the likelihood of jeopardizing the continued existence of the western population of Steller sea lions, or adversely modifying its critical habitat, reasonable and prudent alternatives to the existing pollock trawl fisheries in the BSAI and GOA must accomplish three basic principles: (1) Temporal dispersion of fishing effort, (2) spatial dispersion of fishing effort, and (3) pollock trawl exclusion zones around Steller sea lion rookeries and haulouts.

NMFS published an emergency interim rule implementing the RFRPAs in the **Federal Register** on January 25, 2000 (65 FR 3892), amended on February 10, 2000 (65 FR 6561), and is effective through July 19, 2000.

At its April 2000 meeting, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) voted to recommend extension of the emergency rule. The preamble to the original emergency interim rule provides a detailed description of the purpose and need for the action. This action extends the expiration date of the emergency interim rule establishing Steller sea lion conservation measures (65 FR 3892,

January 25, 2000) from July 19, 2000, to December 31, 2000.

NMFS intends to initiate proposed and final rulemaking later in 2000 to permanently implement Steller sea lion conservation measures as required by the BiOp and the RFRPAs, and as recommended by the Council at its June 1999 meeting. This extension of an emergency interim rule is necessary to prosecute the remainder of the 2000 pollock fishery after July 19, 2000.

Details concerning the basis for this action are contained in the initial emergency interim rule and are not repeated here.

The comments received on the initial emergency interim rule and this emergency rule extension will be responded to later this year in NMFS' final rulemaking to permanently implement Steller sea lion conservation measures. Also, there will be an additional opportunity for comments when the proposed rule is published prior to final rulemaking.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, 1801 *et seq.*, and 3631 *et seq.*

Dated: June 6, 2000.

Bruce C. Morehead,
Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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