

**JUSTIFICATION OF CHANGE
EXPANDED VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM REQUIREMENT
FOR THE PACIFIC GROUND FISH FISHERY
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0573**

The Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) established regional fishery management councils, including the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), to develop fishery management plans for fisheries in the United States (U.S.) exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The fishery management plans are intended to regulate fishing to ensure long-term productivity and achievement of optimum yield from the resources for the benefit of the nation. These plans are implemented by Federal regulations which are enforced by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), in cooperation with State agencies.

Under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, a Vessel Monitoring Program was initiated in 2004, and expanded in 2007. One component of this program is declaration reporting, for confirmation of a specific gear category. Declaration reports are submitted to the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement by telephone and are valid until revised by the vessel operator. Vessel operators making declaration reports receive a confirmation number that verifies that the reporting requirements were satisfied. After a vessel has made a declaration report to NMFS and has been confirmed for a specific gear category, it cannot fish with any gear other than a gear type that has been declared for the vessel. If a vessel operator intends to use the vessel to fish in a different fishing category, a new declaration report must be submitted to revise the old declaration report.

This request is to make minor changes to the declaration reports under OMB Control No. 0648-0573: The requested change will modify the description of three limited entry declaration codes, and add five additional limited entry declaration codes. Changes to the declarations codes are listed below.

- 10 -Limited entry fixed gear, not including shorebased IFQ
- 11 -Limited entry groundfish non-trawl, shorebased IFQ
- 20 -Limited entry midwater trawl, non-whiting shorebased IFQ
- 21 -Limited entry midwater trawl, Pacific whiting shorebased IFQ
- 22 - Limited entry midwater trawl, Pacific whiting catcher/processor sector
- 23 -Limited entry midwater trawl, Pacific whiting mothership sector (catcher vessel or mothership)
- 30 -Limited entry bottom trawl, shorebased IFQ, not including demersal trawl
- 31 -Limited entry demersal trawl, shorebased IFQ

These changes are related to the pending final rule titled, Fisheries off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan; Amendments 20 and 21; Trawl Rationalization Program; Program Components Final Rule (RIN 0648-AY68).

These changes provide additional options for the respondents; no additional responses, burden hours, or costs are expected as a result of the changes.