

**JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
HIGH SEAS FISHING PERMIT, VESSEL IDENTIFICATION, AND
REPORTING REQUIREMENT
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0304**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issues permits, under the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (HSFCA), to United States (U.S.) fishing vessels fishing on the high seas. HSFCA also requires vessels be marked for identification purposes and for permittees to report their fishing effort and catch. These requirements apply to all U.S. vessels fishing on the high seas. NMFS proposes to modify OMB Control No. 0648-0304 by providing an electronic means for submitting the permit application.

NMFS has been using the National Permit System (NPS) to process the paper applications mailed or faxed by applicants. A public interface has been developed in NPS to allow for applicants to create an account and, using that account, apply for certain NMFS permits. Applications for high seas fishing vessel permits would be made available.

Permit holders whose high seas fishing permits expire would be notified by letter of the availability of the on-line application option for renewal of their permit. The permit holders would be provided information to register on the public website of NPS in the letter. A link to this website would also be included on the webpage of the Office of International Affairs to provide the option of on-line application for those applicants that may be inclined to apply on-line instead of the usual paper form.

The on-line application would require the same information as in the paper application and provide the same instructions. The public interface allows for payment of the application fee through Pay.gov. For submission of supporting documents, such as a copy of the vessel's certificate of documentation, the applicant can print a fax cover sheet and fax the documents to the appropriate NMFS office. The high seas fishing permit would be mailed to the applicant.

The burden may be slightly less than with paper submission, due to no longer needing to mail the application; however, at this time we are not re-estimating the burden.