

**JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
MARINE RECREATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAM
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0052**

This request is to provide an updated version of the mail supplemental socio-economic survey that has been previously approved. The target population for this change request is recreational anglers who fish from either charter boats or private boats in the Gulf of Mexico. The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) efforts to collect socio-economic data from marine recreational anglers in the United States (U.S.) rely on both add-on components to the angler intercept survey component of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey and mail surveys of anglers. The overall objectives of the socio-economic data collections are to obtain demographic, social, and economic data on marine recreational anglers that can be used to estimate models of the economic value of marine recreational fishing and/or the economic impacts associated with marine recreational fishing on coastal communities. Names and addresses of anglers for the mail surveys are collected as part of the MRFSS angler intercept survey and/or from angler license frames as stated in the overall collection's complete supporting statement.

Per the overall information collection, the specific questions on the economic survey would vary from year to year and across regions according to the current needs of fisheries managers. Generally, the type of questions to be asked in the socio-economic surveys include questions related to the marine fishing activities of the angler (such as questions about the angler's past fishing trips and experiences), angler preferences for different types of fishing trips and regulations, fishing related expenditures, and demographic questions about the angler. In the attached updated version, the focus of the survey is on the angler's preferences over different regulations that affect boat-based fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. A previous economic mail survey conducted by NMFS was provided as an attachment to the original supporting statement, and is included in this submission, in order to give examples of the general types of questions that would be included in future socio-economic surveys done under this control number.

This updated survey instrument focuses on questions regarding trips taken in the Gulf of Mexico in the private boat and charter boat modes. Section A and B in this version ask about past fishing activities and the angler's most recent trip, Section C asks about preferences for different trip characteristics, and Section D focuses on demographic questions. The total number of pages will remain the same as for previous such surveys, 16 pages total. There will be different survey versions sent to anglers. The versions will vary in that a given survey will either focus on trip related questions on charter trips or will focus on private boat trips. Within either the charter version or the private boat version, there will also be some variation in the numerical quantities associated with features of the trips presented in Section C; for instance, the number of fish that can be kept by the angler.

The survey will be publicized to anglers in the Gulf of Mexico by an online announcement on the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Web site approximately one month before the first survey mailings. As stated in the existing supporting statement, the survey methodology will be that anglers will receive a survey and cover letter in the mail, with a business reply envelope. After one week they will receive a reminder postcard. After two weeks, if they have not returned the survey, they will be mailed a second copy of the survey along with a modified cover letter and business reply envelope. Anglers will be notified of the survey by pre-notice postcards that will go out prior to the mailing of the first survey packet and accompanying cover letter. Sample size is estimated to be approximately 5,200 angler contacts (approximately 20% of the region's angler universe). The existing supporting statement annual estimate for the socio-economic mail survey under this OMB Control Number is a total of 16,800 angler contacts for a nationwide sample of anglers in all fishing modes (shore, charter, private boat).