

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
NMFS NORTHEAST REGION OBSERVER PROVIDERS
OMB CONTROL NO.: 0648-0546

Per Final Rule 0648-BC81 (Framework 24), all NE Region limited access general category (LAGC) vessels would be required to call in weekly with their expected trip usage, similar to current requirements for LAGC trips in access areas. The 259-vessel LAGC scallop fleet is allocated a certain number of trips in the scallop access areas each year. These access areas are closed to all scallop fishing except for these allocated trips. Currently, LAGC vessels are required to call observer program the Thursday proceeding the week (Sunday through Saturday) that they intend to start a scallop trip in an **access area**. This rule will change that requirement so that LAGC vessels must call the observer program the Thursday proceeding the week that they intend to start a scallop trip in **any area**.

However, burden is already assumed for one observer notification call per week, and no vessel is expected to call in more than once per week, so there is no burden or cost change expected.

There were no comments on the proposed rule related to this information collection requirement.