

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
ALASKA COUNCIL CRAB COOPERATIVE REPORT
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0678

Justification: This information collection is revised by changing the annual due date from October Council meeting to March 1 of each year.

The Crab Rationalization (CR) Program is a limited-access system or catch share program for nine Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area crab fisheries that allocates those resources among harvesters, processors, and coastal communities. Under the CR Program, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued quota share (QS) to eligible harvesters based on their participation during a set of qualifying years in one or more of the nine CR Program fisheries.

QS is an exclusive, revocable privilege allowing the holder to harvest a specific percentage of the annual total allowable catch in a CR Program fishery. Each year, the QS holder's annual allocation, called individual fishing quota (IFQ), provides an exclusive harvesting privilege for a specific amount of raw crab pounds, in a specific crab fishery, in a given season. The size of each annual IFQ allocation is based on the amount of QS held by a person in relation to the total QS pool in a crab fishery.

Each cooperative in the CR Program is requested to voluntarily provide an annual report entitled, "CR Cooperative Annual Report on Effectiveness of QS Transfer to Active Participants and Crew Members" to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council) to describe the effectiveness of measures implemented through the cooperatives. These reports originally were to be provided to the Council at its October meeting. This schedule is changed to provide the report to the Council at each March meeting.

This change is not expected to increase cost or burden for the program.