

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL COST AND EARNINGS DATA  
COLLECTION SURVEY IN THE GREATER ATLANTIC REGION  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0643**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document is submitted in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, in support of the cost and earning data collection effort from commercial fishing vessels in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northeast Region. This request is for revision and extension of a currently approved data collection. To date, two rounds of cost data collection have occurred: the 2011 and 2012 Northeast Fishing Vessel Cost Surveys. The data collection will be carried out on an ongoing basis, but on a 4-year cycle. The name of the collection has been changed from "Commercial Fishing Vessel Cost and Earnings Data Collection in the Northeast Region" to "Commercial Fishing Vessel Cost and Earnings Data Collection in the Greater Atlantic Region".

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

Economic data on the costs of operating commercial fishing businesses are needed by NMFS to meet the legislative requirements of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act \(MSA\)](#), the [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#), [Executive Order 12866](#) and the [Regulatory Flexibility Act](#). The Social Sciences Branch (SSB) of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) carries out the responsibilities of the NMFS in the Northeast Region, with the SSB primarily responsible for providing estimates of the economic and social impacts of proposed and final fishery management actions. Cost data are used in many of the frameworks and amendments to fishery management plans that require economic analyses. Without an accurate understanding of the full costs faced by commercial fishing businesses, these analyses would suffer. While data for some trip, or operating, costs are regularly collected by at-sea observers for observed fishing trips, data on the fixed costs (non-trip costs) and crew payments associated with a commercial fishing business are very limited.

The NEFSC's SSB collected cost information from commercial fishing vessel owners for calendar years 2006, 2007 and 2008 in a previous, separate cost data collection effort (Das, 2013). Data were collected via a voluntary mail survey associated with the federal fishing permit renewal application. Each year, approximately 2,700 surveys were sent to the universe of active vessels with a Northeast Region federal permit. The response rate for 2006 was 20.6% and declined further in the subsequent years. The SSB then discontinued the survey due to the low response rate.

There are several reasons that may have contributed to the low response rate to the earlier cost survey effort. First, staff resources to conduct thorough follow-up contacts or send reminders to improve response rates were limited. Secondly, for three consecutive years, surveys were sent to all active vessels (a census of the population), which resulted in the same vessels receiving a

survey multiple times. SSB analysis showed that when vessel owners received a survey multiple times, they responded the first year but did not respond in the following years (Das, 2013). These multiple survey attempts likely led to fatigue and annoyance, which may have resulted in low response. In addition to low response rates, this initial data collection effort also suffered from other short-comings, such as absence of data validation and non-response bias correction.

The SSB implemented a newly designed commercial fishing vessel cost survey in 2012 for costs incurred in 2011 (after receiving clearance on 1/23/2012 under OMB Control Number 0648-0643), sampling approximately 50% of the approximately 3,500 active commercial fishing vessels in the population. From here on, this initial round will be referred to as the 2011 Cost Survey. In 2013, the SSB repeated the cost survey for costs incurred in 2012, sampling the active commercial fishing vessels in the population that were not sampled in the first round. We refer to the second round of the survey as the 2012 Cost Survey. Responses rates were adjusted for non-deliverable surveys and for vessels that were out of scope (e.g., had been sold to another owner, were exclusively charter vessels, etc.). Adjusted response rates were 29.1% for the 2011 Cost Survey and 20.7% for the 2012 Cost Survey. Combining data collected from the two rounds of the Cost Survey, the SSB now has cost data for 741 commercial fishing vessels in the Northeast region. Since last round of this survey effort, the SSB has focused on analyzing the collected cost data and identifying possible needed minor modifications to the survey instrument to increase the quality of data collected in future rounds of the effort. Currently no changes have been made, and if it is decided to make changes, a nonsubstantive change request would be submitted.

This new data, in conjunction with trip-level cost information collected by at-sea observers, enables SSB to conduct more comprehensive economic analyses of proposed management alternatives and related economic research. Richer cost information and primary economic research serve the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and NMFS, on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, in making informed decisions about the expected economic effects of proposed management alternatives.

**2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

The information requested in the survey is primarily used by the NMFS social scientists to measure the economic performance of the Northeast Region's commercial fisheries. The data serves as input for a variety of analyses, such as: regulatory impact analyses, economic profitability profiles, fleet efficiency and productivity measures, and economic impacts of management regulations. To date, the cost data collected by the 2011 and 2012 Cost Surveys have been used in analyses for the Northeast Small Mesh Multi-species Fishery, the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery, and the Northeast Multi-species (Groundfish) Fishery. In addition, the collected cost data were also used in an analysis for the Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) entitled 'Socioeconomic Impact of Outer Continental Shelf Wind Energy Development on Fishing'; this analysis is being conducted by the SSB for BOEM through an interagency agreement.

The survey form, attached here, is organized to ease the collection of data by clearly identifying the types of data being collected, through the use of defined sections. The survey collects information about vessels and their costs via the five sections discussed below.

*A. Vessel Information:*

This section begins by identifying the calendar year that the requested cost information corresponds to. The section continues by collecting information about vessel ownership type, number of owners, whether the vessel was acquired new or from a previous owner, and the calendar year during which the survey respondent became the vessel's owner. This identification information is necessary to link the survey data to other pertinent data, such as vessel logbook and dealer data. The respondent is also asked to estimate the market value of the vessel, and is provided with a definition of the term "market value" (page 3 of the survey instrument).

*B. Repair/Maintenance/Upgrade/Improvement Costs:*

This section collects information on costs incurred for repair and maintenance of the vessel, as well as upgrade and improvement costs that may have been incurred during the survey year. The section begins by asking for information about vessel haul-out costs and frequency. The survey respondent is reminded that the survey is collecting information for the survey year's expenses only, but that the SSB realizes many of these types of costs will vary from year to year (page 4 of the survey instrument).

The survey contains a table with eight expense categories: (1) propulsion engine, (2) deck equipment/other machinery, (3) hull, (4) fishing gear, (5) wheelhouse and electronics, (6) processing and refrigeration, (7) safety equipment and (8) other. For each of the eight categories, the respondent is asked to indicate total expenses for that category for the survey year that may be considered: (a) regular repair and maintenance expenses and (b) upgrade or improvement expenses. The vessel owner is asked to indicate the amount expended that survey for both types of expense (or indicate zero expense). In addition, for upgrade/improvement expenses, the vessel owner is asked to describe the expenditure (pages 5-6 of the survey instrument).

*C. Vessel Related Costs:*

Section C collects costs specific to a vessel that generally are incurred on an annual basis and are not trip costs (i.e., are not operating costs). Survey respondents are asked to indicate costs for the survey year (or indicate zero cost) across eight categories: (1) mooring/dockage fees, (2) permit and license fees, (3) vessel insurance premiums for hull and protection and indemnity insurance, (4) quota or Days at Sea (DAS) lease payments, (5) payments to crew and hired captains, (6) crew benefits, (7) vessel activity and quota monitoring costs and (8) "other" costs (page 7 of the survey instrument).

## *Operating Costs:*

Section D asks the respondent about total operating, or trip related, costs for the specified vessel in the survey year across ten categories: (1) fuel/oil/filter, (2) food and drinking water, (3) ice, (4) bait, (5) fresh water for vessel use, (6) communications, (7) general fishing supplies, (8) general crew supplies, (9) catching handling, and (10) “other” (page 8 of the survey instrument).

### *D. Typical Crew Payment System:*

Section E is designed improve the SSB’s knowledge about the various systems under which crew (including hired captains) are compensated. The respondent is asked to indicate whether the vessel was operated primarily by the vessel owner or by a hired captain in the survey year, as well as to indicate the average number of crew (not including the vessel operator) on trips taken during the survey year. The respondent is then asked to indicate the lay system used to determine the boat’s share, the crew’s share, and the captain’s share, as well as indicate what expenses are deducted at various points in the payment system. A diagram is included to aid the respondent in providing this information. Finally, the respondent is asked to list the types of items crew on the vessel are typically expected to purchase for themselves, outside of the payment system (pages 9-11 of the survey instrument).

### *E. Overall Business Cost:*

This section of the survey collects information about expenses that are not specific to a vessel; these are expenses that are associated with maintaining a commercial fishing business that may have one or more vessels. The section begins by asking the respondent to indicate the number of vessels owned in the survey year. The respondent is then asked to indicate the amount spent in the survey year for each of ten categories: (1) workshop and storage, (2) office, (3) business vehicle usage, (4) business travel, (5) association fees, (6) professional fees, (7) principal paid on business loans, (8) interest paid on business loans, (9) advertising, and (10) non-crew labor (page 12 of the survey instrument).

### *F. Other Costs and Earnings:*

Section G of the survey asks the respondent to describe and indicate any other costs that were incurred during the survey year. The respondent is asked to indicate both the totals of (1) other costs incurred for the specific fishing vessel and (2) other costs incurred for the entire fishing business.

There are two additional questions in this section. The first of these additional questions asks about the health insurance status of the vessel owner and his family. If the vessel

owner purchased health insurance, he or she is asked to indicate the cost paid for insurance in the survey year. This question was added to the survey instrument in response to comments received during the survey instrument focus group sessions, which are described further in response to Question A8. The SSB found that some of the vessel owners participating in the focus group sessions felt that health insurance costs were an important part of their overall economic picture.

The final question in the survey instrument was added in the second round of the survey, for survey year 2012. It asks the respondent to indicate the total gross revenue for all activities generated by the specific vessel in the survey year and apportion total revenue into revenues earned from commercial trips and from non-commercial trips, or chartering, activity. Alternatively, the respondent can indicate that the vessel was inactive during the survey year and earned no revenue. The SSB has access to revenue data from the dealer reporting system, but SSB added this question to enable it to compare this self-reported data to the dealer data, and to ensure that all vessels earning revenues exclusively from chartering were removed from the sample (page 13 of the survey instrument).

Fixed cost information collected via sections B, C, and E-G is essential for the analyses described under Question A1. The SSB cannot fully analyze the economic costs to fishing businesses, and how they may be impacted by proposed regulatory changes, without access to this data. A fishing business' profitability cannot be determined by operating costs alone.

Although the SSB does estimate operating costs based on the information collected by fisheries observers on observed trips, this survey instrument includes a section (Section D) to collect information about these costs. The SSB decided to add this section because of the comments received during the focus groups in which the SSB solicited feedback regarding the survey instrument. In initial versions of the survey that did not collect information about the operating costs associated with a specific fishing vessel, vessel owners expressed frustration that there was no place to include this information and feared that the SSB would not have a complete understanding of their costs. In addition, Section D asks for information about trip-related costs that are not collected by observers, including communications costs and catch handling costs.

### Reporting of Survey Results

Analyses of the cost data, presented in summary form, will be used by NMFS, regional councils, fishing industry, academics, Congressional staff and the public. Qualified researchers with data access and confidentiality agreements will have access to raw data for performing economic research and analyses.

The Social Sciences Branch/NEFSC web site will be available for the general public to obtain summary results of survey responses. Summaries will include descriptive statistics (such as mean and standard deviation) of the various costs being collected (<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/>). No identification information will be revealed via this website.

## Information Quality Guidelines and Confidentiality

The information collected to date has disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information, and information collected in the future will be disseminated as appropriate. NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See Question 10 for information on confidentiality. Data will not be released for public use except in aggregate statistical form without identification as to its source.

The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section [515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

### **3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.**

A private company that specializes in survey implementation will be hired to administer the survey, as was done for the first two rounds of the data collection effort. The survey will be administered via mail and the Internet. Of the returned surveys for the 2011 Cost Survey and 2012 Cost Survey, 67 surveys (18%) and 55 surveys (15%) were submitted online, respectively.

The vessel owners included in the sample will receive a survey packet via mail, which will contain a password and a secured link to a web version of the cost survey. Potential participants will be given the option of completing the survey online or via mail. The non-respondents will be encouraged to complete the survey by an initial reminder post-card. After a period of time, remaining non-respondents will be sent another survey packet. Finally, after the second survey packet mailing and the allowance of some time to respond, vessel owners that have still not responded will be called by telephone.

A toll free telephone number will be established to provide potential respondents with a way to ask general questions about the survey (e.g., purpose, need, confidentiality) or ask specific questions about the mail or online survey. Information about the toll-free number will be included in the survey packet. Respondents also have the option to submit questions or comments by email to an email account dedicated to the survey effort. Finally, the respondent is also provided with the name of the SSB staff member responsible for the cost data collection, his or her direct phone number and email address.

Completed mail surveys will be scanned and the data will be entered manually in a database. Data entered online will be saved in real time. If modifications are made to the existing survey instrument, the modified survey instrument will be pretested with no more than nine vessel owners, randomly selected from the population. The data obtained from pretesting will not be saved. There will be no other means, electronic or otherwise, to submit data or information for the purposes of this study.

#### **4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

Several regional NMFS science centers collect cost and earning information from vessel owners. The Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) has been collecting cost information about the shrimp fishery since 2006 (Liese and Travis, 2010). The Alaska Fisheries Science Center collects cost information from the crab fishery and the small groundfish sector. The Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) collects cost and earnings information from the West Coast limited entry groundfish trawl fishery (Lian, 2010).

The cost information collection effort by the SSB of the NEFSC will solely focus on the active commercial vessels participating in Northeast fisheries. Currently, trip-related cost information is collected by at-sea observers in the Northeast for observed trips. The percentage of observed trips varies from fishery to fishery. The current cost survey effort has focused primarily on the collection of non-trip related costs. However, as noted in Question 2, the current survey instrument does include a section on trip-related, or operating, costs. This was added to increase vessel owner comfort level with the instrument based on feedback received from vessel owners that participated in focus group sessions about the survey instrument. Some variables in the data set collected by at-sea observers and the cost information collected by the survey instrument do overlap. Some overlapping questions like these will help us validate the survey responses. In addition, the cost survey asks about some trip-related costs that observers do not ask about (e.g., communication and catch handling costs).

The SSB also completed its first round of vessel owner and crew socio-economic surveys, for which it received clearance (OMB Control No. 0648-0636, discontinued in 5/31/14 and to be reinstated once revised instruments are completed). Some overlap of questions exists between the cost survey and the owner/crew socio-economic surveys. Both surveys ask about the cost sharing method used to pay crew. The questions in the cost survey are more detailed than those in the owner/crew socioeconomic surveys and are complementary to the other questions about cost. The purpose of including similar questions in the owner/crew socio-economic surveys is that the vessel owner socio-economic survey is stratified by fishery management plan and the SSB would like to see if there are changes in the crew payment methods by fishery. The SSB would also like to detect differences between payment methods reported by owners versus those reported by crew members.

In the third round of the cost survey, the SSB will be cognizant of making sure that vessel owners are not being asked to take both the cost survey and the vessel owner socio-economic survey in the same year. The third round of the cost survey is scheduled for early 2016; the second round of the vessel-owner socio-economic survey will not be implemented until after that year.

#### **5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

This request will collect information from vessel owners, and some of them may represent small businesses. The burden to vessel owners will be minimized by providing postage-paid envelopes to return completed surveys and by providing respondents with the option to complete and submit the survey online. Respondents can also print the survey form directly from the internet

for their own records or can save an online version for later access. Most importantly, vessel owners will only be asked to participate in the survey a maximum of (1) once every four years for vessel owners with one vessel or (2) twice every four years for vessel owners with multiple vessels. This should help reduce response burnout and increase response rates. In addition, respondents are provided with instructions in the initial mailing, printed in Spanish and Portuguese, on how to obtain a copy of the cost survey in Spanish or Portuguese if desired. Finally, participation in the survey will be strictly voluntary.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

Lack of information on the total cost associated with operating commercial fishing businesses severely limits the ability of social scientists to assess fishermen's behavioral responses to changes in regulations, fishing conditions, and market conditions. These costs vary by gear type, vessel size, and geographical location, among other factors. Without this information, analyses that attempt to assess the economic effects of proposed regulations or policy alternatives on vessels, crew and the fishery as a whole are incomplete and inaccurate.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

Not Applicable.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice published August 14, 2014 (79 FR 47618) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

The Social Sciences Branch (SSB) sought feedback from interested stakeholders in various ways throughout the cost data collection process, and will continue to do so as additional rounds of the effort are implemented. SSB staff members met with members of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) and Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC) prior to survey implementation to solicit comments on the cost data collection effort and survey instrument. The SSB also conducted several focus group sessions in two Northeast locations during 2012 to solicit feedback on the survey instrument while it was undergoing development. For all focus group sessions, all participants were commercial fishermen with at least one federal fishing permit. During the course of the current data collection effort, the SSB economist responsible for leading the data collection was interviewed by a few media outlets in order to publicize the survey effort, solicit feedback, and encourage participation as the cost data collection was implemented. The SSB also appeared before both the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) and Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC) during the



summer of 2012 to inform decision makers and the broader audience present at Council meetings about the cost data collection effort, and to respond to questions and concerns about the data collection effort and the survey instrument.

Survey respondents were also asked to provide any comments they wished to in a dedicated section included within the survey instrument itself; this section was included in both the 2011 and 2012 Cost Surveys. In the initial round of the data collection effort, the 2011 Cost Survey, forty-six written comments were received. For the second round of the cost data collection effort, the 2012 Cost Survey, eight-six written comments were received.

Analyses of the data collected in the initial two rounds of the survey effort are on-going. However, the SSB has presented preliminary results and been available for discussion of the cost data collection effort in two public forums: the 2013 Maine Fishermen's Forum (session on March 1, 2013) and the 2014 Maine Fishermen's Forum (session on February 28, 2014). Most comments and questions concerned general support for need to gather information on costs and the eventual use of the cost being collected. There was also a comment noting that vessel length (one of the variables by which the sample is stratified) is not necessarily a perfect proxy for vessel size. However, the SSB explored several variables as potential proxies for vessel size in the survey sampling design, including vessel horsepower and vessel gross tonnage. Vessel length was chosen because there are fewer missing values for this vessel characteristic than for horsepower or gross tonnage. In addition, several of the SSB's existing economic performance measures are reported on by vessel length.

All vessel owners that were sampled in the first round of the data collection effort were sent a one-page summary of results, regardless of whether they responded. As the SSB completes its analyses, it will be sharing results with commercial fishermen and seeking comment on these results, particularly as profiles of segments of the Northeast fleet are developed using data from the cost survey.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No incentives will be provided to survey respondents. Although the use of small monetary incentives has proved to be effective in surveys of the general population, the SSB does not believe they will be effective with commercial fishing vessel owners. This is based on comments received during focus groups with commercial fishermen that were held prior to survey implementation. No incentives were provided in the first two rounds of this survey, the 2011 Cost Survey and the 2012 Cost Survey. SSB does not anticipate providing any incentives to survey respondents when implementing the third round of the data collection effort in 2016.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information and this assurance is included in the form. In particular, as stated on the survey instrument, the data collected will be kept confidential as required by section 402(b) of

the Magnuson-Stevens Act and [NOAA Administrative Order 216-100](#), Confidentiality of Fisheries Statistics, and will not be released for public use except in aggregate statistical form without identification as to its source.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

No questions of a sensitive nature will be asked.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

The frequency of cost data collection will be reduced from the SSB’s initial request for clearance. To reduce respondent fatigue and burden, the SSB will collect cost information on a four year cycle, rather than sampling half the population of Northeast commercial fishing vessels each year. Cost data collection will occur on a four year cycle as follow: Year 1 (scheduled early 2016): 50% of commercial fishing vessels sampled, Year 2 (scheduled early 2017): remaining 50% of commercial fishing vessels sampled, Year 3 (2018): no data collected and Year 4 (2019): no data collected. The latter two years of each four year cycle will be used to conduct analyses, disseminate results, and seek feedback from stakeholders on the data collection effort, including the survey instrument and the products that stem from the collected data.

The population of Northeast commercial fishing vessels is approximately 3,493 vessels, excluding vessels that are exclusively charter vessels. For each year that the survey is implemented, the voluntary survey panel will be made up of approximately 50% of the population (i.e., 1,747 commercial fishing vessels). In the following year, the remaining half of the population will be sampled. Then, the survey will not run for two years. Therefore, the same commercial fishing vessel will not be sampled more than once in a four year period. However, it is possible that an owner of multiple commercial fishing vessels could receive a survey two years in a row during a four year period; however, these surveys would be for different vessels.

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average an hour per respondent. This includes the time required to read the introductory statement and instructions, and the gathering of business information necessary to complete the survey. The response rate is expected to be 30%, resulting in approximately 524 returned surveys each year the survey is implemented. As a result, the survey is expected to impose a total of 524 burden hours on the Northeast fishing industry for the years in which the survey is run.

**Per year of data collection (for 1<sup>st</sup> 2 of 4 years, with no burden for years 3 and 4):**

Total number of active permit holders	3,493
Sample size	1,747
Expected survey response rate	30%
Expected number survey respondents	524
Average burden hours/survey	1
Total burden hours	524

**Annualized over four year cycle:**

Total number of active permit holders	3,493
Sample size	873
Expected survey response rate	30%
Expected number survey respondents	262
Average burden hours/survey	1
Total annual burden hours	262

**Per four year cycle:**

Total number of active permit holders	3,493
Sample size	3,493 (1,747 in year 1 and 1,747 in year 2)
Expected survey response rate	30%
Expected number survey respondents	1,048 (524 in year 1 and 524 in year 2)
Average burden hours/survey	1
Total burden hours	1,048

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

The respondents may choose to make photo copies of their completed forms. The survey instrument is currently 14 pages in total and the cost of photocopying each survey is estimated to be \$1.40 (14 pages at 10 cent per page). If the respondent chooses to fill out the form online and print a hardcopy, the cost is also estimated to be \$1.40. Assuming an annualized return of 262 surveys, the total annual cost burden to the respondents for record keeping would be approximately \$366.80.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

Total estimated cost to the federal government is \$100,000 per year of survey implementation (with implementation occurring in the first two years of a four year cycle), or \$50,000 per year on an annualized basis. A private firm will be hired to administer the survey, conduct follow up contacts, and enter and validate the data. In addition to survey firm contract costs, there will be additional costs for project related travel, printing surveys and for supplies. A table of itemized costs is presented below.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
<b><i>Instrument Modification and Outreach</i></b>	\$20,000
<b><i>Data Collection</i></b>	
Printing and postage	\$15,000
Follow-up phone calls	\$9,000
Survey tracking, scanning/data entry	\$6,000
Project management	\$25,000
<b><i>Data preparation</i></b>	
Data verification /checks	\$4,000
Development of population weighting adjustments	\$5,000
Project management	\$16,000
<b>Grand Total Per Survey Year</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

This is a request for the extension of a currently approved cost data collection. To date, two rounds of this data collection have occurred, the 2011 and 2012 Cost Surveys. The next round of this data collection is planned for early 2016.

The only program adjustment is the reduction in the frequency of data collection. The SSB's initial request for clearance indicated that half the population of the Northeast's commercial fishing vessels would be surveyed each year; therefore, cost data collection would have occurred each year.

The SSB has decided to reduce the frequency of data collection as it move forwards with its cost program. The decision was made to reduce respondent fatigue and burden, and to allow SSB adequate time to incorporate the collected data into NMFS data streams, to rigorously analyze the data and produce peer-reviews documents, to widely disseminate results to stakeholders and the general public, and to solicit feedback from stakeholders on the data collection effort, including the survey instrument and products that stem from the collected data. The cost data collection for which SSB is seeking renewal will occur on a four year cycle as follows: Year 1 (scheduled early 2016): 50% of commercial fishing vessels sampled, Year 2 (scheduled early 2017): remaining 50% of commercial fishing vessels sampled, Year 3 (2018): no cost data collected and Year 4 (2019): no cost data collected. The other change that may occur is that the existing survey instrument may be modified. However, SSB does not anticipate any major changes to its content or lengthening the survey.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.**

Survey data will be analyzed using standard economic data analysis methods. Survey results will be reported over time through a series of studies prepared for fisheries management. It is anticipated that results will also be reported through academic publications, presentations at conferences, and technical guides. Final NMFS reports and citations for external documents will be posted on <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/>. Data will also be released to the public, but only in summary or tabular form. As data analysis progresses, updates will be made to the SSB's web page at: <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/read/socialsci/>.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

Not Applicable.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

Not Applicable.