

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at [Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov](mailto:Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov). Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0376 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Elaine Saiz, Chief, Financial Services Division, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, (301) 427–8725 or [elaine.saiz@noaa.gov](mailto:elaine.saiz@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**I. Abstract**

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) amended the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) to provide for voluntary reduction of excess fishing capacity through fishing capacity reduction (buyback) programs. Excess fishing capacity decreases fisheries earnings, complicates fishery management, and imperils fishery conservation. The statutory objective of a program is “to obtain the maximum sustained reduction in fishing capacity at the least cost and in a minimum period of time.” Buybacks pay fishermen either to: (1) Surrender their fishing permits; or (2) both surrender their permits and either scrap their fishing vessels or restrict vessel title to prevent fishing. Buybacks can involve either a Federal or State fishery. Buybacks can be funded via a long-term loan from the Federal government to the fishery (industry-funded buybacks), to be repaid by the industry by post-buyback landing fees, or funded from appropriations (non-industry funded) or other non-loan sources of funds. Programs involving industry financed loans are authorized by section 1111 of title XI of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) established programs to reduce excess fishing capacity by paying fishermen to surrender their vessels/permits. The information collected by NMFS involves the submission of buyback requests by industry, submission of bids, referenda of fishery participants and reporting of collection of fees to repay buyback loans. For buybacks involving State-managed fisheries, the State may be involved in developing the buyback plan and complying with other information

requirements. NMFS requests information from participating buyback participants to track repayments of the loans as well as ensure accurate management and monitoring of the loans. The fees for recordkeeping and reporting requirements at 50 CFR parts 600.1013 through 600.1017 form the basis for the collection of information.

**II. Method of Collection**

Paper reports or electronic reports are required from buyback participants. Methods of submittal include mailing of paper reports, electronic submission via the internet, and/or facsimile transmission.

**III. Data**

*OMB Control Number:* 0648–0376.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission (extension of a current information collection).

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit organizations; individuals or households; and state, local, or tribal government.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 200.

*Estimated Time per Response:* Implementation plan, 6,634 hours; referenda votes, bids, seller/buyer reports and annual fee collection reports, 4 hours each; completion of fish ticket, 10 minutes; monthly fee collection report, 2 hours; advising holder/owner of conflict with accepted bidders' representations, 1 hour; potentially 270 hours-state approval/review of plans. *Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 15,838.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$1,596 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Required to obtain or retain benefits, Mandatory.

*Legal Authority:* Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act.

**IV. Request for Comments**

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated

collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.*

[FR Doc. 2021–01393 Filed 1–21–21; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; West Coast Region Vessel Identification Requirements**

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of Information Collection, request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before March 23, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at [Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov](mailto:Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov). Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0355 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential

Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Keeley Kent, (206) 247-8252 or [keeley.kent@noaa.gov](mailto:keeley.kent@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**I. Abstract**

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

The success of fisheries management programs depends significantly on regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing (or other activity) to the vessel owner or operator is crucial to enforcement of regulations issued under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. A vessel's official number is required to be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on a weather deck. It identifies each vessel and should be visible at distances at sea and in the air. Law enforcement personnel rely on vessel marking information to assure compliance with fisheries management regulations. Vessels that qualify for particular fisheries are also readily identified, and this allows for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the vessel numbers to report suspicious or non-compliant activities that they observe in unauthorized areas. The identifying number on fishing vessels is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and other marine agencies in issuing regulations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions necessary to support sustainable fisheries behaviors as intended in regulations. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit from these requirements, as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred, and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

**II. Method of Collection**

Fishing vessel owners physically mark vessels with identification numbers in three locations per vessel.

**III. Data**

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0355.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission, extension of a current information collection.

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 1,203.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 15 minutes per gear marking.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 901 hours.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$25,701.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory.  
*Legal Authority:* 50 CFR 660.12.

**IV. Request for Comments**

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.*

[FR Doc. 2021-01392 Filed 1-21-21; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**Patent and Trademark Office**

[Docket No. PTO-T-2020-0043]

**Sovereign Immunity Study**

**AGENCY:** Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Request for information.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) published a notice in the **Federal Register** on November 5, 2020, requesting information on the extent to which

patent or trademark rights holders are experiencing infringement by state entities without adequate remedies under state law, and the extent to which such infringements appear to be based on intentional or reckless conduct. With this new notice, the USPTO is supplementing the previous notice with additional questions.

**DATES:** *Comment date:* Written comments must be received on or before February 22, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** For reasons of government efficiency, comments must be submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). To submit comments via the portal, enter docket number PTO-T-2020-0043 on the homepage and click "search." The site will provide a search results page listing all documents associated with this docket. Find a reference to this Request for Information and click on the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in ADOBE® portable document format or MICROSOFT WORD® format. Because comments will be made available for public inspection, information that the submitter does not desire to make public, such as an address or phone number, should not be included in the comments.

Visit the Federal eRulemaking Portal ([www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)) for additional instructions on providing comments via the portal. If electronic submission of comments is not feasible due to a lack of access to a computer and/or the internet, please contact the USPTO using the contact information below for special instructions regarding how to submit comments by mail or by hand delivery, based on the public's ability to obtain access to USPTO facilities at the time.

**Submissions of Business Confidential Information:** Any submissions containing business confidential information must be marked "confidential treatment requested" and submitted through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Submitters should provide an index listing the document(s) or information they would like the USPTO to withhold. The index should include information such as numbers used to identify the relevant document(s) or information, document title and description, and relevant page numbers and/or section numbers within a document. Submitters should provide a statement explaining their grounds for objecting to the disclosure of the information to the public as well. The USPTO also requests that submitters of business confidential