

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Alaska Halibut Fisheries: Charter
OMB Control No. 0648-0575

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

Abstract

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Regional Office, requests revision of this currently approved information collection.

This revision would add requirements for the purchase and validation of charter halibut stamps, add a new field to the existing ADF&G saltwater charter logbook to validate the stamps, and add appeals for an Initial Administrative Determination received for incomplete payment of the stamp fee liability. This revision would not add any new respondents to this collection but would increase the time burden for the logbook from 4 minutes to 5 minutes to include 1 minute for the new field that would be added to the logbook.

This revision is due to the proposed rule (RIN 0648-BN18) that would require a stamp for all charter vessel anglers 18 years of age or older for each calendar day they intend to catch and retain halibut on a charter vessel in International Pacific Halibut Commission Regulatory Areas 2C (Southeast Alaska) and 3A (Southcentral Alaska). This rule is necessary to promote stability and economic viability in the charter halibut fishery, and is intended to promote the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982, and other applicable laws.

This information collection contains the logbooks, landing reports, permit and transfer applications, and administrative appeals for the Pacific halibut charter fishery off Alaska. This collection is necessary for NMFS to manage and administer the charter halibut fishery under the Charter Halibut Limited Access Program and the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan.

Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

Management of and regulations for Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) in Alaska are developed on the international, Federal, and state levels by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Alaska Region, and the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). The IPHC and NMFS manage fishing for Pacific halibut through regulations established under authority of the [Convention between the United States Halibut Fishery of the Northern Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea](https://iphc.int/uploads/pdf/basic-texts/iphc-1979-pacific-halibut-convention.pdf)¹ (Convention),

¹ <https://iphc.int/uploads/pdf/basic-texts/iphc-1979-pacific-halibut-convention.pdf>

the [Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982, 16 U.S.C. 773c](#)² (Halibut Act), and [section 303\(b\) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#)³ (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*).

NMFS manages the charter halibut fishery off Alaska under the Charter Halibut Limited Access Program (CHLAP), the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) for commercial and charter halibut fisheries in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A, and the Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) Program. Regulations for the charter halibut fishery off Alaska are determined annually by the Council and the IPHC. NMFS publishes these regulations each year as part of the [IPHC annual management measures](#).⁴

This information collection contains the logbook, landing reports, permit and transfer applications, and administrative appeals for the Pacific halibut charter fishery off Alaska. This collection of information is necessary for NMFS to manage and administer the charter halibut fishery under the CHLAP, the CSP, and the RQE Program. This collection is an essential part of the sustainable management of the Pacific halibut fishery off Alaska, and is an integral element of ensuring regulatory compliance in the charter halibut fishing sector. A limited access program with catch share elements provides stability and increases net benefits from the fishery, but does require additional administration to ensure compliance. Information on the CHLAP, CSP, and the RQE Program is on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/resources-fishing/sport-halibut-fishing-alaska> and in regulations at 50 CFR [300.65](#)⁵ and [300.67](#)⁶.

NMFS implemented the CHLAP in 2010 to meet allocation objectives in the charter halibut fishery and provide stability in this fishery by limiting the number of charter vessels that operate in IPHC regulatory areas 2C (Southeast Alaska; Area 2C) and 3A (Central Gulf of Alaska; Area 3A) ([75 FR 554, January 5, 2010](#)).⁷ The CHLAP established new Federal charter halibut permits (CHPs) for operators in the charter halibut fishery in Areas 2C and 3A.

Under the CHLAP, CHPs and military CHPs are required at 50 CFR 300.67 for charter vessels operating in Areas 2C and 3A. Since February 1, 2011, all vessel operators in these areas with charter anglers catching and retaining halibut must have a valid CHP on board during every charter halibut vessel fishing trip. To receive a CHP (other than a military CHP or a community CHP), an eligible applicant needed to apply during the application period in 2010 ([75 FR 1595, January 12, 2010](#)).⁸ As the application period and selection process for initial issuance of CHPs has ended, no new CHPs (other than military CHPs and community CHPs) will be issued, and CHPs may only be obtained through transfer. Eligible applicants may apply for military CHPs or community CHPs at any time. Community CHPs are approved under OMB Control Number 0648-0665 (Alaska Community Quota Entity [CQE] Program).

The charter halibut sector in Area 2C and 3A is managed to charter catch limits established under the CSP. In January 2014, NMFS implemented the CSP to maintain stability, economic viability, and

² <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?hl=false&edition=prelim&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title16-section773c&f=treesort&num=0&saved=%7CKHRpdGxlojE2IHNIY3Rpb246NzczlGVkaXRpb246cHJlGltKSBPUiAoZ3JhbnVsZWlkOlVTQy1wcmVsaW0tdGI0bGUxNi1zZWNoaW9uNzczKQ%3D%3D%7CdHJlZXNvcnQ%3D%7C%7C0%7Cfalse%7Cprelim>

³ <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/magnuson-stevens-fishery-conservation-and-management-act>

⁴ <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/pacific-halibut-catch-sharing-plan-and-annual-management-measures-federal-register-rules-and>

⁵ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-III/part-300/subpart-E/section-300.65>

⁶ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-III/part-300/subpart-E/section-300.67>

⁷ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2010/01/05/E9-30662/pacific-halibut-fisheries-limited-access-for-guided-sport-charter-vessels-in-alaska>

⁸ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2010/01/12/2010-389/pacific-halibut-fisheries-limited-access-for-guided-sport-charter-vessels-in-alaska>

diversity of halibut user groups by addressing allocation conflicts between participants in the commercial and charter halibut fisheries ([78 FR 75844, December 12, 2013](#)).⁹ The CSP establishes sector allocations that vary in proportion with levels of annual halibut abundance and that balance the needs of the charter and commercial halibut fisheries over a wide range of halibut abundance in each area. Under the CSP, the Council develops recommendations to the IPHC for charter angler harvest restrictions that are intended to limit harvest to the annual charter halibut fishery catch limit in each area.

The CSP includes the Guided Angler Fish (GAF) Program, which authorizes limited annual transfers of commercial halibut individual fishing quota (IFQ) as GAF to qualified CHP holders for harvest by charter vessel anglers in Areas 2C or 3A. GAF and GAF permits enable CHP holders to lease a limited amount of IFQ from commercial quota share holders to allow charter vessel anglers to harvest halibut in addition to, or instead of, the halibut harvested under the daily bag limit for charter anglers. GAF harvested in the charter halibut fishery is accounted for as commercial halibut IFQ harvest.

The Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) Program was established in 2018 as part of the Pacific Halibut and Sablefish IFQ Program (IFQ Program) in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A ([83 FR 47819, September 21, 2018](#)).¹⁰ This program allows a designated RQE, which is a non-profit entity qualified under NMFS rules, to purchase and hold a limited amount of commercial halibut quota share that would yield additional pounds of Recreational Fishing Quota on an annual basis to augment the amount of halibut available for harvest in the charter halibut fishery. The RQE Program provides a mechanism for the charter fishery to compensate the commercial IFQ fishery for halibut quota shares purchased from the commercial sector to increase the charter annual catch limits. A functioning RQE Program is intended to promote long-term efficiency in the use of the halibut resource by allowing compensated transfers of quota shares between commercial quota share holders and the charter fishery, through an RQE, under a “willing buyer and willing seller” approach. On December 29, 2022, Congress enacted the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.¹¹ The portion of the Act at Division S, Title I, Section 106 authorizes the Council to recommend, and the Secretary of Commerce to approve, regulations that would collect fees from charter vessel operators to provide funding to the RQE.

Reasons for Revisions Due to the Rule (RIN 0648-BN18)

This information collection is revised due to the proposed rule that would establish regulations to require a charter halibut stamp for guided sport (i.e., charter) vessel anglers 18 years of age or older for each day they intend to catch and retain halibut on a charter vessel in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A. This proposed rule is necessary to promote stability and economic viability in the charter halibut fishery, and is intended to promote the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Halibut Act, and other applicable laws.

This information collection is revised to add requirements for the purchase and validation of the new charter halibut stamps, add a new field to the existing ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook (Charter Logbook) to record the number of stamps validated on each charter vessel fishing trip, and add appeals for an Initial Administrative Determination received for incomplete payment of the charter halibut stamp fee liability.

Persons who hold CHPs, or their designee, would purchase charter halibut stamps from NMFS through NMFS’s eFISH system. Stamps would be electronic, and the fee would be \$20.00 per stamp. Charter

⁹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/12/12/2013-29598/pacific-halibut-fisheries-catch-sharing-plan-for-guided-sport-and-commercial-fisheries-in-alaska>

¹⁰ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/09/21/2018-20410/fisheries-of-the-exclusive-economic-zone-off-alaska-authorize-recreational-quota-entity-to>

¹¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2617/text>

vessel guides would use the Charter Logbook to validate the stamps for anglers intending to retain halibut. NMFS would make the collected fees from the stamp purchases available to the RQE to use on behalf of the charter fishery to purchase halibut quota share issued in the IFQ Program.

The proposed information collection requirements are necessary to collect RQE Program fees, and administer and enforce the RQE Program that was requested by the charter vessel industry. This rule would not add any new respondents to this collection but would increase the time burden for the Charter Logbook from 4 minutes to 5 minutes to include 1 minute for the new field that would be added to the logbook to validate stamps.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

Information on the requirements in this information collection is summarized in the table. Additional information on these requirements is provided in the subsections below the table. The NMFS forms are available on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/alaska-sport-charter-halibut-applications-and-reporting-forms>. Also available on this website is a link to the ADF&G website, which provides information on the Charter Logbook.

Requirement	From whom will the information be collected?	Statute	Regulation (50 CFR)	URLs for Regulations	Form?	Submission Method ²	Frequency of Collection	Needs and Uses of Information Collected	Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside the Department of Commerce or the government?
Application for Annual Registration of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	CHP holders	16 U.S.C. 773	300.67(a)(4)	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.67#p-300.67(a)(4)	Yes	mail, delivery, fax, eFISH	Annually	Used by CHP holders to register their transferrable and non-transferrable CHPs, except for military and community CHPs. Used by NMFS and the Council to obtain updated information on CHP-holder owner information, track CHP usage and latent capacity, decrease the number of invalid versions of CHPs used, help enforce the caps on CHP ownership, and provide better understanding of CHP use and leasing behavior.	NMFS, the Council, and the public
Application for Transfer of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	CHP holders	16 U.S.C. 773	300.67(i)	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.67#p-300.67(i)	Yes	Mail, delivery, or fax	As needed by the respondent	Used by CHP holders to transfer a transferrable CHP to an individual or non-individual entity that meets the eligibility requirements. Used by NMFS to determine whether the transfer meets the regulatory requirements.	NMFS, the Council, and the public
Application for Military Charter Halibut Permit	Military morale, welfare, and recreation programs	16 U.S.C. 773	300.67(l)	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.67#p-300.67(l)	Yes	Mail, delivery, or fax	Once	Used by a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Program of the U.S. Armed Services to apply for a military CHP. Used by NMFS to determine the applicant's authority to apply for a CHP on behalf of the MWR Program and the eligibility of the program to receive a military CHP.	NMFS and the public

Requirement	From whom will the information be collected?	Statute	Regulation (50 CFR)	URLs for Regulations	Form?	Submission Method ²	Frequency of Collection	Needs and Uses of Information Collected	Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside the Department of Commerce or the government?
				300.67#p-300.67(l)					
Purchase Charter Halibut Stamps [new collection]	CHP holders	16 U.S.C. 773 and 16 U.S.C. 1801 <i>et seq.</i>	679.46 [new]	—	No	eFISH	As needed	Used by CHP holders to purchase electronic charter halibut stamps that would be required for charter vessel anglers 18 years of age or older each day they intend to catch and retain halibut on a charter vessel in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C or 3A. Used by NMFS to collect RQE Program fees, and administer and enforce the RQE Program.	NMFS
Application for Transfer Between IFQ and GAF and issuance of GAF permit	CHP holders	16 U.S.C. 773 and 16 U.S.C. 1801 <i>et seq.</i>	300.65(c)(5)(ii) and (c)(5)(iii)	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.65#p-300.65(c)(5)(ii) and https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.65#p-300.65(c)(5)(iii)	Yes	Mail, delivery, or fax	As needed by the respondent	Used by CHP holders to transfer Area 2C or 3A commercial halibut IFQ for use as GAF or to return unused GAF to the IFQ permit holder from which it was obtained. Used by NMFS to determine the eligibility of the transfer to occur, to transfer GAF to the CHP holder or return unused GAF to the IFQ permit holder, and to issue a GAF permit.	NMFS and the public

Requirement	From whom will the information be collected?	Statute	Regulation (50 CFR)	URLs for Regulations	Form?	Submission Method ²	Frequency of Collection	Needs and Uses of Information Collected	Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside the Department of Commerce or the government?
				(5)(iii)					
Electronic and manual GAF landing report	GAF permit holders	16 U.S.C. 773 and 16 U.S.C. 1801 <i>et seq.</i>	300.65(d)(4)(iii)	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.65#p-300.65(d)(4)(iii)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic report: eFISH Manual report²: Fax or email 	Must be submitted by 23:59 hours Alaska local time on the last calendar day of a charter vessel fishing trip.	Used by GAF permit holder to report GAF landings. Used by NMFS management and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE) to manage permit accounts, track GAF harvests, and monitor transfers between IFQ and GAF.	NMFS
GAF permit log	GAF permit holders	16 U.S.C. 773 and 16 U.S.C. 1801 <i>et seq.</i>	300.65(d)(4)(iii)(E)(2)	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.65#p-300.65(d)(4)(iii)(E)(2)	Yes	Not submitted	Must be available for enforcement officers to review when they board a vessel.	Used by a GAF permit holder to record a GAF Report submission confirmation number and GAF fish information after a trip in which GAF halibut were retained. Used by NMFS management and NOAA OLE staff to cross reference electronic GAF report data and charter logbook data.	NMFS
Administrative Appeals	CHP holders	16 U.S.C. 773	300.65(c)(5)(ii)(B)(4)(iii) , 300.67(a)(4)(iii) ; 300.67(h)	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/	No	Mail, delivery, or fax ³	As needed by the respondent	Used by a CHP holder who receives an Initial Administrative Determination to appeal a decision by NMFS. Used by NMFS to assess information provided by the appellee in relation to a previous program application denial.	NMFS National Appeals Office

Requirement	From whom will the information be collected?	Statute	Regulation (50 CFR)	URLs for Regulations	Form?	Submission Method ²	Frequency of Collection	Needs and Uses of Information Collected	Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside the Department of Commerce or the government?
			(6); and 679.46(a)(1)(vii) [new]	section-300.65#p-300.65(c)(5)(ii)(B)(4)(iii); https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.67#p-300.67(a)(4)(iii); https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-300/section-300.67#p-300.67(h)(6)					
ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook	CHP holders	16 U.S.C. 773	300.65(d) and 679.46(a)(1)(i) [new]	https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/	ADF&G form	Mail ⁴ or ADF&G electronic logbook	For a charter vessel fishing trip during which halibut were caught and retained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on or after the first Monday in April and on or before 	Used by the charter vessel operators to record all halibut caught and kept by charter vessel anglers and to validate the charter halibut stamps required for a charter vessel fishing trip.	ADF&G shares the data with NMFS.

Requirement	From whom will the information be collected?	Statute	Regulation (50 CFR)	URLs for Regulations	Form?	Submission Method ²	Frequency of Collection	Needs and Uses of Information Collected	Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside the Department of Commerce or the government?
				part-300/section-300.65#p-300.65(d)			<p><i>December 31</i>, must be submitted to ADF&G and postmarked or received no later than 14 calendar days after the Monday of the fishing week (as defined in 50 CFR 300.61)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>on January 1 through the first Sunday in April</i>, must be submitted to ADF&G and postmarked or received no later than the second Monday in April. 	Used by NMFS as the basis for estimating annual charter harvests of halibut relative to the charter catch limits.	

¹ **Mail:** NMFS Alaska Region, Restricted Access Management, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668

Delivery: 709 West 9th Street, Room 713, Juneau, AK, 99801

Fax: (907) 586-7354

eFISH is the NMFS Alaska Region's online Fisheries Information System. <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/webapps/efish/login>

² If a GAF permit holder is unable to submit a GAF landings report due to hardware, software, or Internet failure for a period longer than the required reporting time, or a correction must be made to information already submitted, the GAF permit holder must contact NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE), Juneau, AK, 800-304-4846 (Select Option 1). The GAF Manual Landing Report is submitted to NOAA OLE by fax (907-586-7313) or email (enf.dataclerk@noaa.gov).

³ **Mail or delivery:** National Appeals Office, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; **Fax:** (307) 713-2384.

⁴ **Mail:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish – RTS, Logbook Program, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1565.

Changes to this Collection Since the Last Extension

No changes have been made to this collection since the last extension of this information collection was approved by OMB in 2024.

Application for Annual Registration of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP) [No changes]

CHP holders in Areas 2C and 3A are required to annually register their CHPs. This requirement does not include holders of military CHPs (described below) or community CHPs (approved under OMB Control No. 0648-0665), but does include transferrable CHPs held by Community Quota Entities (CQEs). The annual registration requirement was implemented in 2019 (84 FR 64023; November 20, 2019). Prior to this action, a CHP remained valid until amended, revoked, suspended, or superseded by a more recent version issued by NMFS.

The registration process provides a systematic way to update information on holders of transferrable CHPs, improve enforcement of CHP usage on the water, and facilitate the retirement of non-transferrable CHPs. Without this, there are limited tools available to ensure that only valid CHPs are being used in the fishery.

A CHP is valid only for the calendar year for which it is registered with NMFS. CHP holders may register their permits for the season any time after January 1 of that year.

There is no deadline for registration of a CHP; however, vessel operators in Areas 2C and 3A must have an original, valid CHP on board during every charter vessel fishing trip on which Pacific halibut are caught and retained. A halibut charter operator must ensure that a registered, valid CHP is in their possession before conducting a charter halibut fishing trip.

This application collects permit holder information, CHP identification, CHP ownership and affiliation information, and a question regarding whether financial compensation was received for allowing another person to use the CHP in the previous fishing year.

A CHP holder submits a separate registration form for each CHP with a unique ownership structure. CHPs with the identical ownership and affiliation information may be registered on the same form. “

Application for Transfer of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP) [No changes]

The application period and initial issuance of CHPs ended in 2010 (other than for military CHPs, see below, and community CHPs, see OMB Control No. 0648-0665); therefore, a CHP may be obtained only through transfer. The CHPs were issued as either transferrable or non-transferrable, based on certain minimum participation criteria. Non-transferrable CHPs are invalid once the permit holder dies or the holding entity dissolves, or new shareholders or partners are added to the business.

The application form collects identification information of the CHP(s) to be transferred; transferor and transferee identification and contact information; transferee ownership and affiliation information; and transaction information. This application requires return of the original CHP(s) and notarized signatures of the transferor and the transferee or their authorized representatives.

This application is not used by holders of military CHPs or community CHPs. Military CHPs are non-transferable, and transferors of community CHPs use a separate application approved under OMB Control No. 0648-0665.

Application for Military Charter Halibut Permit [No changes]

A military CHP is available at no cost and is required for a Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Program of the U.S. Armed Services to operate a charter halibut vessel in Areas 2C and 3A. Military CHPs do not require annual registration and do not expire.

A military CHP is non-transferable, issued without angler endorsements, and is valid only in the regulatory area designated on the permit. An MWR Program may hold multiple military CHPs; however, NMFS reserves the right to limit the number of permits.

The information collected on this application includes the applicant's name, business address, and branch of the U.S. military represented and the number of charter permits requested for each IPHC regulatory area. Additionally, official documentation must be attached showing the individual completing the application has the authority to apply for a military CHP on behalf of the MWR Program.

Three entities hold military CHPs: Eielson Air Force Base MWR Program, Seward Army Resort, and the U.S. Army MWR (Ft. Greely). NMFS has issued seven military CHPs, but none have been issued since 2012. For purposes of this analysis, one response is used in the tables in Q12 and Q14.

Purchase charter halibut stamps [New]

This rule (RIN 0648-BN18) would add a new section, 50 CFR 679.46, that requires a charter halibut stamp for all charter vessel anglers 18 years of age or older for each calendar day they intend to catch and retain halibut on a charter vessel in IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C and 3A. The charter halibut stamps must be obtained and applicable fees paid by persons who (1) have a valid registration with the ADF&G to provide sport fishing guide services in Alaska on saltwater; and (2) hold a valid CHP, a community CHP, or a military CHP.

The proposed fee is \$20.00 per stamp. Fee payment must occur prior to the end of the fishing year, and validation of the stamps (see ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook [Charter Logbook], below) must occur before the charter vessel begins each charter vessel fishing trip. The \$20.00 fee would apply to each day a stamp is required for an angler who intends to catch and retain halibut. The CHP holder would be responsible for creating the eFish online account to purchase stamps and for ensuring that fees are paid for the stamps. For military CHPs, the MWR Program would be considered the CHP holder. For community CHPs, the CQE would be considered the CHP holder. A CHP holder would be responsible for purchasing, at minimum, the number of charter halibut stamps that are validated in a fishing year and to comply with the requirements of 50 CFR 679.46. If the number of stamps validated exceeds the number of stamps purchased on an account, then NMFS would notify the CHP holder and give them the opportunity to reconcile the account payments prior to the annual fee payment deadline (see Administrative Appeals, below).

The stamps would be electronic and could be purchased at any time and in any quantity. To purchase stamps a CHP holder, or their designee, would access eFISH using their user ID and temporary password issued by NMFS. eFish is NMFS Alaska Region's secure, online Fisheries Information

System and is currently accessed by CHP holders for a variety of purposes, including the annual registration of CHPs and recording the harvest of GAF.

Fee payments must be made electronically through eFISH in U.S. dollars by automated clearing house, credit card, or electronic check drawn on a U.S. bank account. Payment instructions are posted on the NMFS Alaska Region website. To pay the fee, participants select the payments tab and select the link for the appropriate fee. The fee payment page summarizes their fee liability and transactions. After selecting “submit payment,” the participant is redirected to a pay.gov payment entry screen. The participant provides the following information in pay.gov: payment amount, billing address, account holder name, payment method, and information associated with the payment method.

NMFS would use the information collected to collect RQE Program fees, and administer and enforce the RQE Program that was requested by the charter vessel industry. The fee would provide the RQE Program with meaningful funding that benefits the entire charter halibut sector while limiting the cost burden experienced by the individual CHP holders that would pay the fee.

Once purchased, the stamps would be linked to the eFish account of the CHP holder that purchased them. Stamps are not transferrable and do not expire. Stamps that have not been validated by the end of the fishing year would roll over into the next fishing year. If a CHP is revoked or invalidated, the stamps would remain linked to the account that held that CHP. Should another valid CHP be transferred to the person, or entity, associated with that eFish account, the stamps may then be used for the valid CHP.

NMFS expects that CHP holders would purchase stamps at least once per season, and likely at some periodic monthly or weekly interval. In Area 2C, 274 unique persons hold 529 CHPs. In Area 3A, 300 unique persons hold 426 CHPs. Not all of these persons and permits are active in any particular year. On average, 247 businesses annually have been active in the charter fishery in Area 2C, and 228 businesses annually have been active in Area 3A. A total of 475 CHP holders annually are expected to have eFISH accounts and purchase stamps. The active businesses in Area 2C are expected to purchase and validate approximately 107,500 halibut stamps annually. The active businesses in Area 3A are expected to purchase and validate approximately 112,100 halibut stamps annually.

The time burden is estimated at 5 minutes to purchase charter halibut stamps. As comments are being solicited, the burden estimate could change after the proposed rule public comment period or in a subsequent supporting statement once respondents have been able to purchase charter halibut stamps.

Application for Transfer (Lease) between Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and Guided Angler Fish (GAF) and issuance of GAF permit [No change]

A person holding a CHP or military CHP may voluntarily participate in the GAF Program, which allows transfer of commercial halibut IFQ for use as GAF by charter vessel anglers to provide anglers an opportunity to harvest a number or size of halibut over and above the CSP restriction in place for Area 2C or 3A. Use of GAF and the associated GAF permit are voluntary, but the regulations require submittal and approval of a complete application for transfer in order to transfer between IFQ and GAF and for the CHP holder to receive a GAF permit.

On approval of the Application for Transfer between IFQ and GAF, NMFS issues a GAF permit to the CHP holder receiving GAF. Some GAF transfers are “self-transfers;” that is, the same person holds both the IFQ and the CHP and transfers the IFQ to themselves. A GAF permit authorizes the CHP holder designated on that GAF permit to allow charter vessel anglers to retain halibut in excess of the effective CSP restriction, up to the limits on GAF use at § 300.65(c)(5)(iv).

CHP holders requesting GAF must specify the CHP to which the GAF permit will be linked. Each GAF permit is linked to only one CHP or military CHP in Area 2C or Area 3A, and the link may not be changed during that year. NMFS will issue a revised GAF permit to the GAF permit holder each time during the year that it approves a transfer between IFQ and GAF for that GAF permit.

CQEs that hold community CHPs are also eligible to receive IFQ as GAF. The application for transfer between IFQ and GAF by a CQE is approved under OMB Control No. 0648-0665.

GAF permits expire at 11:59 pm on the day prior to the automatic GAF return date. NMFS returns unused GAF to the IFQ permit from which it originated 15 days before the end of the commercial halibut fishing season for that year. GAF may not be retained by charter vessel anglers on or after this return date. No application is required for the automatic return of unused GAF.

GAF permit holders who wish to return unused GAF prior to the automatic GAF return date may use this application to transfer the GAF back to the IFQ permit holder from which it was obtained. Applications to return unused GAF are accepted only from August 1 through August 31.

NMFS will not approve an application to transfer IFQ to GAF before annual IFQ is issued for each year or after one month prior to the closing of the commercial halibut fishing season for that year. Applications to transfer IFQ to GAF will not be accepted during the one month prior to the automatic GAF return date to ensure that all GAF transactions are completed before the automatic return date.

Persons who submit an Application for Transfer between IFQ and GAF will receive notification of NMFS's decision to approve or disapprove the transfer.

NMFS issues GAF in numbers of fish, basing the conversion between annual IFQ and GAF on average weight of halibut landed in each region's charter halibut fishery (Area 2C or 3A) during the previous year, as determined by the ADF&G. The number of GAF requested is deducted from or added to the annual IFQ permit in round weight equivalent pounds.

The IFQ permit holder is responsible for all IFQ cost recovery fees resulting from the transferred GAF. No fees will be assessed for any unused GAF unless it is later harvested by the IFQ permit holder. IFQ cost recovery fees are authorized under OMB Control No. 0648-0711.

To report GAF landings, the GAF permit holder must submit a GAF landing report (see below).

As the GAF program is voluntary, CHP holders can weigh their own costs and benefits of participating in the program.

The application collects transferor and transferee identification and contact information, IFQ and/or GAF permit information, and transaction information. Both the transferor and the transferee or their authorized representatives are required to sign this application.

Electronic and manual GAF landing report [No change]

A GAF permit holder, who is also the CHP holder, must obtain at his or her own expense the technology (computer and Internet connection) required to support the NMFS-approved electronic reporting system to report GAF halibut landings (eFISH). The GAF program is voluntary, and charter permit holders can weigh their own costs and benefits of participating in the program.

A GAF permit holder must use eFISH, the NMFS-approved electronic reporting system on the Alaska Region web site, to submit a GAF landing report. The GAF permit holder must enter information for each GAF halibut retained by an angler on a charter vessel fishing trip in Area 2C or 3A. The GAF electronic landing report collects number and length of GAF retained; vessel, guide license, and GAF permit numbers; and for community CHPs only, the community or port where charter vessel fishing trip began and ended.

GAF harvested in the charter halibut fishery is accounted for as commercial halibut IFQ harvest. GAF permit holders are required to report GAF landings in eFISH in a timely fashion in order to debit those landings from the IFQ holder's account as soon as possible, and to flag any other potential problems. Electronic reporting alerts GAF permit holders of their account balance and alerts the GAF permit holder and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE) if the account has been overdrawn. Without electronic reporting, more GAF accounts would likely be overdrawn.

The GAF reporting requirements in this information collection allow NMFS to track GAF harvests and properly debit GAF from the appropriate IFQ accounts. Electronic GAF reporting is required:

1. For respondents to access current account balances for account management and regulatory compliance
2. For NMFS management:
 - To monitor account transfers and GAF landings history.
 - To manage permit accounts, conduct transfers, and assess fees.
3. For OLE:
 - To monitor transfers between IFQ and GAF
 - To monitor compliance with authorized GAF harvests and other program rules.

Upon submission of a daily electronic GAF landing report, eFISH issues a GAF report submission confirmation number which the GAF permit holder must record on the GAF permit log on the back of the GAF permit. This confirmation number allows cross reference of the Charter Logbook data and the electronic GAF report by management and NOAA OLE staff.

Some GAF permit holders are in remote locations (operating out of remote lodges) and do not always have reliable internet access. If a GAF permit holder is unable to submit the GAF landings report electronically due to hardware, software, or Internet failure for a period longer than the required reporting time, or a correction must be made to information already submitted, the permit holder must contact NOAA OLE by telephone. A GAF manual landing report form is available on the NMFS AKR website to help streamline the submission of manual landing information for GAF permit holders and NOAA OLE, and to help ensure the correct information is submitted on time. GAF permit holders must still telephone NOAA OLE as required at § 300.65(d)(4)(iii)(A)(4) but may then use the form to submit the information by fax or email.

GAF permit log [No change]

Upon receipt of a GAF electronic landing report, eFISH issues a confirmation number for the GAF permit holder (respondent) to keep as evidence that NMFS received the GAF landing report and the GAF account was properly debited. A GAF permit log is printed on the back of each GAF permit. The GAF permit holder must record the confirmation number, the date the GAF was retained, and the length of the GAF on the GAF permit log after a trip in which GAF halibut were retained. This information must be available for enforcement officers to review when they board a vessel.

A GAF permit holder may have several GAF permits and GAF permit logs by the end of the season. The GAF permit holder is required to retain all GAF permits and GAF permit logs, along with their Charter Logbooks, for two years for inspection upon request of an authorized enforcement officer.

Administrative appeals [REVISED: Added appeal for incomplete payment of charter halibut stamp fee liability]

Revision: This rule would add regulations at §679.46(a)(1)(vii) for a CHP holder to appeal an Initial Administrative Decision (IAD) received for incomplete payment of the charter halibut fee liability. If the number of stamp validations exceeds the number of stamps purchased on an account, then NMFS would notify the CHP holder and give them the opportunity to reconcile the account payments prior to the annual fee payment deadline. A CHP holder would have 30 days from the date of the notice to either pay the fee liability or provide evidence and an explanation demonstrating how the fee liability determination is in error. If a CHP holder does not pay the fee liability or provide evidence and an explanation demonstrating how the fee liability determination is in error, and the Regional Administrator determines that the CHP holder's evidence and explanation do not support a reversal or modification of the fee liability notice, then the Regional Administrator may issue an IAD upholding the fee liability determination. The process to appeal an IAD would be the same as the current process described below. The estimates currently used in this supporting statement for the number of respondents and responses for appeals are conservative; therefore, no changes are made to the respondents, responses, or burden for administrative appeals because of this rule.

If NMFS disapproves an Application for Transfer between IFQ and GAF or an Application for Annual Registration of CHP, NMFS will provide the reason in writing by mail, posted on the date of that decision, and provide the applicant with a 30-day evidentiary period to correct deficiencies in the application. NMFS will send an Initial Administrative Determination (IAD) to the applicant following the expiration of the 30-day evidentiary period if NMFS determines there is sufficient reason to deny the application.

A person that receives an IAD may appeal the decision. Administrative appeals of adverse decisions made by NMFS Alaska Region must be submitted to the NMFS National Appeals Office¹² under the appeals process set out at [15 CFR part 906](#).

ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook (Charter Logbook) [REVISED: Added regulations for validation of charter halibut stamps]

Revision: This rule would add regulations at §679.46(a)(1)(i) that require validation of charter halibut stamps in the Charter Logbook. The charter vessel guide would be responsible for ensuring there is a validated charter halibut stamp for each charter vessel angler 18 years of age or older aboard the charter vessel who intends to retain halibut on that day. Before a trip begins, guides would be required to validate the stamps by recording in the logbook the number of stamps needed for that charter trip. A new field would be added to the logbook to record the number of stamps validated for that trip. Pre-trip validation is an enforcement feature that would prevent guides from opportunistically validating stamps only when they believe they may be intercepted by enforcement officers, and would also provide an enforcement component to the RQE fee program.

¹² <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/rules-regulations/appeals>

A stamp would be valid from the time that it is validated, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), through 2400 A.l.t. on the calendar day for which it was validated and would not be transferable between charter vessel anglers or separate charter vessel fishing trips. For the purposes of stamps, a charter vessel fishing trip that spans multiple days would treat each calendar day as an individual charter vessel fishing trip, meaning that a stamp would need to be validated for each angler on each calendar day.

Information on stamp validation from Charter Logbooks would be shared by the ADF&G with NMFS. NMFS would merge the stamp validation information back to the individual CHP holder accounts so that the accounts contain a record of stamp purchases and validations. CHP holders would be responsible to maintain their accounts so that stamp validations do not exceed stamp purchases at the end of a fishing year.

The time burden for the Charter Logbook would be increased from 4 minutes to 5 minutes to include 1 minute for validating stamps. This rule would not change the number of respondents or responses for the logbook. This logbook is already completed for every charter vessel fishing trip, and the stamp validation field would be required to be completed for every charter vessel fishing trip that intends to retain halibut.

Regulations at 50 CFR 300.65(d) require halibut charter vessels operating in IPHC Areas 2C and 3A to record all halibut caught and kept by charter vessel anglers in the ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook (Charter Logbook) and to submit Charter Logbook data sheets. The Charter Logbook is the primary reporting requirement for operators in the charter fisheries for all species harvested in saltwater in Areas 2C and 3A. Logbook reporting is the basis for estimating annual charter harvests of halibut relative to the charter catch limits. ADF&G compiles the Charter Logbook data to show where fishing occurs, the extent of participation, and the species and the numbers of fish caught and harvested by individual anglers. In recent years, the ADF&G added Charter Logbook reporting requirements to accommodate Federal halibut charter regulations. More information on the Charter Logbook is available on the ADF&G website at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=SFGuidesLicense.Logbook>.

ADF&G implemented electronic logbooks (eLogbooks) in 2021 and requires that charter operators use eLogbooks to report their sport fishing activity in Area 2C. eLogbooks are currently optional in Area 3A but will be required beginning in 2025. Since the implementation of the eLogbook, ADF&G recommends that operators who use an eLogbook retain a paper logbook at all times to use in the event of technical difficulty or equipment failure. The information collected and reporting requirements for each logbook format is the same.

The charter vessel guide is responsible for complying with the following recordkeeping and reporting requirements by the end of the calendar day or by the end of the charter vessel fishing trip, whichever comes first.

- Use a separate data sheet for each calendar day that halibut are caught and retained during a multi-day trip.
- Use a separate data sheet for each charter vessel fishing trip if two or more trips were taken on the same day.
- Record each charter fishing trip on one data sheet, unless halibut are caught in both Area 2C and in Area 3A, in which case use an additional data sheet to record halibut caught in the second area.
- Retain all data sheets showing halibut harvest for 2 years after the end of the fishing year for which the logbook was issued.

- Make the data sheets available for inspection upon the request of an authorized officer.

The deadlines to submit the Charter Logbook data sheets are as follows:

For a charter vessel fishing trip during which halibut were caught and retained

- *on or after the first Monday in April and on or before December 31*, data sheets must be submitted to the ADF&G and postmarked or received no later than 14 calendar days after the Monday of the fishing week (as defined in 50 CFR 300.61)
- *on January 1 through the first Sunday in April*, data sheets must be submitted to the ADF&G and postmarked or received no later than the second Monday in April.

Current Federal regulations require charter vessel guides to enter the names and sport fishing license numbers of the charter vessel anglers on Charter Logbooks before a trip begins. A complete Charter Logbook includes the date of fishing trip, guide license number, GAF permit number, Alaska sport fishing license numbers and names and signatures of clients, Alaska residency, the catch of any halibut, any GAF halibut retained, and a signature certifying the accuracy of the entry.

If GAF halibut are caught and kept during a charter vessel fishing trip, the guide must record the GAF permit number on the logbook data sheet for that trip and have a copy of the GAF permit and GAF permit log on board the vessel during that trip. The GAF permit number in the logbook allows ADF&G and NOAA OLE staff to cross reference the GAF electronic reports and the GAF permits and logs.

Each charter vessel angler who retains halibut caught in IPHC areas 2C or 3A must acknowledge that his or her name, license number (if required), and number of halibut retained are recorded correctly by signing the Charter Logbook data sheet on the line that corresponds to the angler's information. Because the charter vessel guide must verify the signature of each charter vessel angler, the cost and burden of the angler signature are included in the this logbook's burden and cost.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

If this proposed rule (RIN 0648-BN18) is implemented, purchase of charter halibut stamps would be made electronically through eFISH. The GAF electronic landing report is submitted online to NMFS through eFISH. The Application for Annual Registration of CHP may be submitted online to NMFS through eFISH.

eFISH is the NMFS Alaska Region online Fisheries Information System. eFISH provides an online method to submit applications and access to participants' NMFS permit accounts. eFISH allows participants to pay fees; check account balances, vessel balances, and landing ledger reports; check quota share holdings reports and processor quota share holding reports from various fisheries; report landings; conduct quota transfers; renew certain fishery permits; and check a GAF permit balance. Permit holders access eFISH through a User ID and password issued by NMFS. Instructions for using eFISH are posted on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/node/30749>.

In 2021, ADF&G transitioned to electronic logbooks for charter operators and guides, which is required in Area 2A and currently optional in Area 3A. The electronic logbook is a web-based application that is designed to work on most smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers. ADF&G recommends

that operators who choose to use an electronic logbook retain a paper logbook at all times to use in the event of technical difficulty or equipment failure.

All of the applications are posted on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/alaska-sport-charter-halibut-applications-and-reporting-forms> as fillable pdfs for respondents to download, print, and mail, deliver, or fax to NMFS.

The Application for Transfer of CHP cannot be submitted electronically because it requires return of the original CHPs.

NMFS Alaska Region is working toward offering more online services. The current data entry and retrieval system is nearing the end of its life, and a new integrated system is in development. As this system is developed, we will be transitioning to the new system which will allow all of the information will be entered online and submitted directly and automatically into a database

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2.

None of the information collected as part of this information collection duplicates other collections. This information collection is part of a specialized and technical program that is not like any other. Federal regulations specify use of this information collection to administer the charter halibut fishery, and there are not alternate means or methods to perform the functions laid out in this supporting statement.

In general, Alaska Region information collections are prepared and reviewed by staff familiar with all of the information collection requirements for the region. Staff work together to develop information collection requirements for new programs. In addition, NMFS staff work closely with the staff of the ADF&G and the IPHC to reduce duplication in information collection requirements to the extent possible given overlapping jurisdictions and complex fisheries. Senior staff at the Alaska Region, NMFS headquarters, and the Department of Commerce General Counsel review all new and revised information collection requirements that are associated with rulemakings. This process minimizes the potential for duplication of information collection requirements for participants in the Federal fisheries off Alaska.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

This information collection impacts small entities but does not impose a significant effect on them. NMFS attempts to minimize the burden of this collection on all respondents. For Regulatory Flex Act purposes, those entities that are directly regulated by the proposed action (RIN 0648-BN18) are considered small entities.

Although NMFS requires annual registration of CHPs, the information requested in the registration application should be readily available to the CHP holder and does not require specific port, vessel, or user information that could unduly constrain charter operators in unpredictable circumstances.

Military CHPs and community CHPs do not expire and are not required to be registered annually, which saves these permit holders the time burden and expense of registration. As military CHPs and community CHPs were issued to provide access opportunities for military personnel and economic benefits to small rural communities, an annual registration process that could result in limiting the use of

these permits would be inconsistent with the purpose of these special permits. Additionally, community CHPs have an existing annual reporting requirement.

CHP transfers and transfers between IFQ and GAF are voluntary and done only when the permit holder deems necessary.

A toll-free phone number is available for participants to contact NMFS Restricted Access Management staff for help or information.

The CHP applications and the application to transfer between IFQ and GAF are available online as fillable pdfs. The military CHP application, the application to transfer a CHP, and the application to transfer between IFQ and GAF may be submitted by fax. The application for annual registration of a CHP may be submitted by fax or online using eFISH. eFISH may also be used to check a GAF permit balance, enter GAF landings, and report a GAF landing.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

This information collection is required to manage commercial and charter halibut fishing under the Halibut Act, the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*), and under 50 CFR parts 300 and 679.

It would not be possible to effectively manage the CHLAP, the CSP, or carry out the mandates of the Halibut Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Act if this collection were not conducted or conducted less frequently. It provides the Council and NMFS with information about the organization and fishing activity of charter halibut businesses, and provides a process to track and limit the number of CHPs and to transfer halibut between the commercial and charter halibut sectors. This information and process are necessary to reduce overcrowding of productive halibut grounds and address allocation conflicts between commercial and charter halibut fisheries participants, while balancing the needs of all who depend on halibut for food, sport, or livelihood.

Management measures to limit charter harvests to their catch limits are established annually by the IPHC. The selection of the appropriate management measures is based in part on estimated harvest under the previous annual management measures, and estimates of future catch limits and charter angler effort. Charter angler harvest is estimated from the ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook.

Without the ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook, or a similar collection of information, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to estimate charter harvest with any level of confidence. Therefore, it would be unknown if modifications to the annual management measures were required to limit harvest to the charter catch allocation. This uncertainty could lead to conflicts between the charter and commercial sectors, if it were perceived that the commercial sector was being held to its catch limits under the CSP, but the charter sector was allowed to exceed their limits. Without reliable estimates of charter harvest, the goals of the CSP to maintain each sector's catch to its limit under the CSP could be compromised and the sustainability of the fishery could be potentially threatened.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

If the proposed rule (RIN 0648-BN18) is implemented, then the purchase of charter halibut stamps could occur more often than quarterly because CHP holders would be able to purchase stamps at any time to suit their needs.

One collection in this package requires respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly. Under 50 CFR 300.65(d), ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook data sheets must be submitted to the ADF&G and postmarked or received no later than 14 calendar days after the Monday of the fishing week (as defined in 50 CFR 300.61) in which the halibut were caught and retained between the first Monday in April and on or before December 31. This information is required to monitor, manage, and develop management measures for the charter halibut fishery.

This collection does not require respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it.

This collection does not require respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.

This collection does not require respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years.

This collection is not in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study.

This collection does not require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.

This collection does not include a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use.

This collection does not require respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A proposed rule (RIN 0648-BN18) soliciting public comments will be published coincident with this submission.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gift to respondents is provided under this program.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

All information collections by NMFS Alaska Region are protected under confidentiality provisions of section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act as amended in 2006 (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*) and under NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, which sets forth procedures to protect confidentiality of fishery statistics. This information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines.

NMFS and the National Appeals Office 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. 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 (the Information Quality Act), which requires NMFS to ensure the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information it publicly disseminates. Public dissemination of data collected by this information collection is governed by [NOAA's information quality guidelines](#), which were issued on October 30, 2014.¹³

The System of Records Notices (SORNs) that cover this information collection is [COMMERCE/NOAA-6, Fishermen's Statistical Data](#)¹⁴ and [COMMERCE/NOAA-19, Permits and Registrations for United States Federally Regulated Fisheries](#)¹⁵. An amended Privacy Act SORN for COMMERCE/NOAA-19 was published in the *Federal Register* on August 7, 2015 (80 FR 47457), and became effective September 15, 2015 (80 FR 55327).

The Privacy Impact Assessment that covers this information collection is [NOAA NMFS Alaska Region Local Area Network \(NOAA4700\)](#).¹⁶

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This information collection does not involve information of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

The revision to this information collection for the proposed rule (RIN 0648-BN18) would add information collection requirements for the purchase and validation of charter halibut stamps and for appeals. The rule would not add any new respondents to this collection but would increase the time burden for the Charter Logbook from 4 minutes to 5 minutes to include validation of stamps.

A new collection, the purchase of charter halibut stamps, has been added to the table below. NMFS expects that CHP holders would purchase stamps at least once per season, and likely at some periodic monthly or weekly interval. In Area 2C, 274 unique persons hold 529 CHPs. In Area 3A, 300 unique persons hold 426 CHPs. Not all of these persons and permits are active in any particular year. On average, 247 businesses annually have been active in the charter fishery in Area 2C and 228 businesses

¹³ <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/information-technology/policy-oversight/information-quality/information-quality-guidelines>

¹⁴ <https://www.commerce.gov/opog/privacy-privacy-act/system-records-notice/system-records-notice-commerce-noaa-6>

¹⁵ <https://www.commerce.gov/opog/privacy-privacy-act/system-records-notice/system-records-notice-commerce-noaa-19>

¹⁶ https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/NOAA4700-PIA-FY24_SAOP_Approved_Delegated.pdf

annually have been active in Area 3A. Therefore, a total of 475 CHP holders annually are expected to purchase stamps.

The table also has been updated to reflect recent data on CHP holders and has been updated to use the most current rates available (May 2024) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the Alaska mean hourly wage (https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ak.htm). The rate \$24.21 is for Occupation Code 45-0000 (Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations, and the rate \$23.68 is for Occupation Code 39-9032 (Recreation Workers).

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/year	Annual # of Responses / Respondent	Total # of Annual Responses	Burden Hrs / Response	Total Annual Burden Hrs	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs
ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook	Fishermen	574 ⁶	Avg. 35 trips per CHP	37,310 (35 trips x 1,066 CHPs)	5 min	3,109	24.21	75,269
Electronic and manual GAF landing report	Fishermen	96	Average 12 trips per respondent and 1 response per trip	1,152	5 min	96	24.21	2,324
GAF permit log	Fishermen	96	Average 12 trips per respondent and 1 response per trip	1,152	2 min	38	24.21	920
Application for Annual Registration of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	Fishermen	600 ¹	Varies	1,000 ¹	15 min	250	24.21	6,053
Application for Transfer of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	Fishermen	100 ²	1	50	2 hrs	100	24.21	2,421
Application for Military Charter Halibut Permit	Military Personnel	1	1	1	0.5 hr	1	23.68	24
Application for Transfer (Lease) Between Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and Guided Angler Fish (GAF) and issuance of GAF permit	Fishermen	96 ⁴	Varies	600 ⁴	1.5 hrs	900	24.21	21,789
Administrative Appeals	Fishermen	1	1	1 ⁵	4 hrs	4	24.21	97
Purchase of Charter Halibut Stamps	Fishermen	475 ³	Varies	475 ³	5 min	40	24.21	968
Totals				41,741		4,538		\$109,865

¹ The respondent and response estimates were determined as follows: The current number of CHP holders is 550 (not including military and community CHP holders). The estimated respondents consist of the 550 current holders plus 50 transfers expected to occur each year that would then need to be registered (550 + 50 = 600). This estimate is an annual maximum because NMFS expects that not all CHP holders would register their permits every year, and permits with identical ownership and affiliation may be registered on the same form. The 550 CHP holders hold 955 CHPs (not including military and community CHPs) and when added to the expected 50 annual transfers that would need to be registered, equal roughly 1,000 CHPs, or 1,000 responses annually.

² The transfer application is completed by two respondents, the transferor and the transferee.

³ As not all CHP holders and permits are active in any particular year, the number of respondents expected to have eFISH accounts and purchase stamps is estimated at 475 CHP holders. The number of responses per respondent will vary because stamps may be purchased at any time. NMFS expects that CHP holders would purchase stamps at least once per season, and likely at some periodic monthly or weekly interval. The total number of responses used is 475, which equals once per season. If the proposed rule is implemented, the responses will be updated in future supporting statements to more accurately reflect how often stamps are purchased annually.

⁴ In 2023, NMFS processed 600 IFQ to GAF transfers for 96 different charter halibut permit holders. Approximately 5% of the GAF permits transferred in 2023 were "self-transfers;" that is, the same person held both the IFQ and the CHP, and they transferred the IFQ to themselves.

⁵ No appeals have been filed. For purposes of this analysis, one response is used.

⁶ The number of respondents is estimated to equal the number of regular, military, and community CHP holders, which is approximately 574 (550 regular, 3 military, and 21 community CHP holders) holding 1,066 CHP permits (955 regular, 7 military, and 104 community CHPs).

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

Operating costs account for the typical inclusive general office services packages that include expenses for email, fax, copying, mailing, and printing.

Some participants in the CHLAP and CHP programs submit more than one instrument in this information collection. Therefore, the number of unique respondents is used to show the estimate of individual participants who could be expected to annually submit information during the renewal period for this information collection. The estimated number of unique respondents is 574 and consists of approximately 550 CHP holders, 3 military CHP holders, and 21 community CHP holders.

Information Collection	# of Respondents/ year	Annual # of Responses / Respondent	Total # of Annual Responses	Cost Burden / Respondent	Total Annual Cost Burden
ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook	574	Avg. 35 trips per CHP	37,310 (35 trips x 1,066 CHPs)	Operating costs - \$5	74,620
Electronic and manual GAF landing report	96	Average 12 trips per respondent and 1 response per trip	1,152	0	0
GAF permit log	96	Average 12 trips per respondent and 1 response per trip	1,152	0	0
Application for Annual Registration of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	600	Varies	1,000	Operating costs - \$5	5,000
Application for Transfer of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	100	1	50	Operating costs - \$5	500 ¹
Application for Military Charter Halibut Permit	1	1	1	Operating costs - \$5	5
Application for Transfer (Lease) Between Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and Guided Angler Fish (GAF) and issuance of GAF permit	96	Varies	600	Operating costs - \$5	3,000
Administrative Appeals	1	1	1	Operating costs - \$5 Attorney - \$500 ²	505
Purchase of Charter Halibut Stamps	475	Varies	475	0	0
TOTALS	574 unique respondents		41,741		\$83,630

¹The application is completed by two respondents, the transferor and the transferee. As each respondent is expected to have some operating costs in responding, the total annual cost is 50 responses x 2 respondents x \$5 operating costs = \$500.

²4 hours of attorney time at \$125 per hour

³The estimate of total annual cost burden was determined as follows: Logbook data must be submitted to ADF&G weekly between April and the end of the season. Although the season does not end until December 31, 99 percent of all charter fishing has been completed by the end of September each year. Therefore, we assumed that the season will run 26 weeks. As the permit holder may submit more than one data sheet (response) at a time, at most, a permit holder would submit responses 26 times. If all 574 permit holders submit their responses every week, during the season, the total cost would be 574 x 26 x \$5 = \$74,620. This estimate is high because it is unlikely that all permits will be used every week of the season. However, a permit holder with several permits could allow several businesses to use those permits, so the logbook sheets would be submitted separately.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

NMFS costs associated with data collection for the GAF program are recoverable through IFQ program cost recovery fees. NMFS does not track fees associated with GAF separate from other IFQ program fees. Under this cost recovery program, NMFS is authorized to collect direct program costs from the permit holders. Therefore, the information collection requirements of the GAF landing report, the GAF permit log, and the Application for Transfer between IFQ and GAF and issuance of GAF permit do not impose a cost on the Federal Government.

The fully loaded salary cost includes 52 percent of the salary to account for benefits and other overhead costs. The grade and step are from the Department of Commerce Alternative Personnel System (CAPS) 2024 pay tables (<https://www.commerce.gov/hr/practitioners/caps/pay-administration>). The general schedule grade equivalent for CAPS is included in parentheses.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary/Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	ZS-4 step 4 (GS 7/8)	\$124,818	40		49,927
Other Federal Positions	5 X ZA-2 step 3 (GS 9/10)	\$147,393	125		184,241
	3 X ZA-3 step 3 (GS 11/12)	\$194,101	75		145,576
	ZA-4 step 3 (GS 13/14)	\$272,761	25		68,190
	GS 14	\$275,448	0.2		551
Contractor Cost					
Travel					
Other Costs:					
Mailing costs and supplies					1,500
Special permit paper					4,500
TOTAL					\$454,485

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

The tables below show the program changes due to the rule (RIN 0648-BN18) and adjustments made based on the most current data available.

Information Collection	Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision ¹	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook	574	559	37,310	37,310	3,109	2,487	<u>Adjustment</u> : Updated the number of respondents. <u>Program change</u> : The total burden hours increased because the burden per response was increased from 4 minutes to 5 minutes to include 1 minute to validate stamps, which would be required by this rule.
Electronic and manual GAF landing report	96	96	1,152	1,152	96	96	No change
GAF permit log	96	96	1,152	1,152	38	38	No change
Application for Annual Registration of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	600	586	1,000	1,000	250	250	<u>Adjustment</u> : Updated the number of respondents.
Application for Transfer of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	100	100	50	50	100	100	No change
Application for Military Charter Halibut Permit	1	1	1	1	1	1	No change
Application for Transfer (Lease) Between Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and Guided Angler Fish (GAF) and issuance of GAF permit	96	96	600	600	900	900	No change
Administrative Appeals	1	1	1	1	4	4	No change
Purchase of Charter Halibut Stamps [new collection]	475	—	475	—	40	—	<u>Program change</u> : New collection instrument that would be added by this rule.
Total for Collection	574*	560*	41,741	41,266	4,538	3,876	
Difference	14 (adjustment)		475 (program change)		662 (program change)		

* Unique respondents. Some participants in the CHLAP and CHP programs submit more than one instrument in this information collection. Therefore, the number of unique respondents is used to show the estimated number of separate participants who could annually submit information during the renewal period of this information collection.

Information Collection	Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	
ADF&G Saltwater Sport Fishing Charter Trip Logbook	74,620	72,670	<u>Adjustment</u> : Miscellaneous costs were updated because the number of respondents was increased, which increased the total miscellaneous costs.
Electronic and manual GAF landing report	0	0	No change
GAF permit log	0	0	No change
Application for Annual Registration of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	5000	5,000	<u>No change</u>
Application for Transfer of Charter Halibut Permit (CHP)	500	500	No change
Application for Military Charter Halibut Permit	5	5	No change
Application for Transfer Between IFQ and GAF and issuance of GAF permit	3,000	3,000	No change
Administrative Appeals	505	505	No change
Purchase of Charter Halibut Stamps [new collection]	0	—	<u>Program change</u> : New collection instrument that would be added by this rule.
Total for Collection	\$83,630	\$81,680	
Difference	\$1,950 (adjustment)		

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

It is anticipated that some of the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information.

Results of the information collection will be made available to the public through the Council and IPHC meeting processes. This information is typically available online at <http://www.npfmc.org/> and at <http://www.iphc.int/>.

Results of this information collection are available to the public on the NMFS Alaska Region website. Spreadsheets of CHP holders and GAF permit holders since 2018 are posted at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/permits-and-licenses-issued-alaska>. Annual summary reports of CHP that summarize transaction counts and prices since 2012 and GAF that summarize average price per pound and transaction counts and prices since 2014 are posted at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/sustainable-fisheries/alaska-fisheries-management-reports#charter-halibut>.

Final administrative appeal decisions with redactions are posted on the NMFS National Appeals Office website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/rules-and-regulations/appeals>. Personally identifiable information and confidential business information submitted in an administrative appeal are not released to the public.

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

The OMB control number and expiration date is not displayed on the Charter Logbook because it is a document of the ADF&G. The OMB control number and expiration date is not displayed on the GAF permit log because it is a printed form on the back of the GAF permit. The agency will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all other instruments.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#)¹⁷ and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#)¹⁸.

¹⁷ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2014-title5-vol3/pdf/CFR-2014-title5-vol3-sec1320-9.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2014-title5-vol3/pdf/CFR-2014-title5-vol3-sec1320-8.pdf>