

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Pacific Coast Groundfish Trawl Rationalization Program Permit
and License Information Collection
OMB Control No. 0648-0620

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

Abstract

This request is for a revision and extension of a current information collection.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, authorizes Fishery Management Councils to prepare and amend fishery management plans (FMP) for any fishery in waters under its jurisdiction. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) manages the groundfish fishery in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the area 3–200-mile zone off the Washington, Oregon, and California coasts.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) began developing a trawl rationalization program, a catch share program, for the Pacific coast groundfish limited entry trawl fishery in 2003. The program is composed of three sectors, as follows: 1) the shore based individual fishing quota (IFQ) sector, 2) the at-sea whiting mothership (MS) sector, and 3) the at- sea whiting catcher/processor (C/P) sector. The shore based IFQ sector consists of quota share (QS) permit owners, catcher vessels that are registered to limited entry trawl permits, have vessel accounts, fish for quota pounds (QP), and first receiver site license (FRSL) holders who receive the shore based IFQ landings. The at-sea trawl fleets catch and process Pacific whiting (whiting) with midwater trawl gear. In the MS sector, mothership catcher vessels (MS/CVs) harvest the whiting and deliver the catch to large MS vessels, where it is sorted and processed at-sea. One or more MS coops may form and/or vessels may fish in a non-cooperative fishery. Both coop and non-coop fishery vessels pool their harvest together. In the C/P sector, C/P vessels catch and process whiting at-sea under a single C/P coop.

This revision will include the removal of three ICs: Catch monitoring plans / First Receivers Preparation & Submission, Catch monitoring plans / First Receivers Inspection, & Shore based scales / First Receivers Inspection. The removal of these ICs is necessary because it is encompassed in the First Receiver Site License Application Form. This action decreases the duplicate actions and burden to fill out said forms.

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.**

The Council developed and NMFS approved the trawl rationalization program with the intent to increase net economic benefit to the nation and to provide participants with economic stability in the fishery, full utilization of the trawl sector allocation, improved safety, improved product quality and value, increased accuracy, and mitigated or decreased environmental impacts than occurred under previous fishing practices and regimes.

The Council established the trawl rationalization program through two amendments to the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP: Amendment 20, which established the trawl rationalization program; and Amendment 21, which set formal intersector allocations of groundfish species. The Council took final action on Amendment 20 at their November 2008 meeting, with subsequent related actions at the March 2009, April 2009, June 2009, November 2009 and April 2010 meetings. The Council took final action on Amendment 21 at their April 2009 meeting, with trailing actions at the March 2010 meeting.

NMFS implemented the program in January 2011 as a limited access privilege program (LAPP) under the MSA, as reauthorized in 2007. A LAPP is considered a grant of permission to the holder of the limited access privilege to participate in the program. The privilege may be revoked, limited, or modified by the Secretary of Commerce at any time. In other words, under this program, catch shares are a conditional privilege to harvest a specified amount of fish. NMFS issued permits, as described below, for this conditional privilege.

Sector descriptions

In the shore based IFQ sector, QS permit owners hold percentages, or shares, for each of 29 IFQ species groups. Each year, based on the shore based IFQ sector allocation; NMFS allocates QP to QS accounts in proportion to each QS permit owner's QS percentages. The permit owner must then move these QP to a vessel account in order to be fished. The QS permit/account is like an investment account where the QP accrue, while a vessel account is like a checking account, where the QP can be "spent", or used to offset IFQ catch (landed or discarded). Any participant who owns a vessel and registers it to a trawl limited entry permit (LEP) can request a vessel account and fish in the IFQ program; they do not need to also own a QS permit. Vessel account owners can buy QP from any QS permit owner or any other vessel account. Likewise, QS permit owners do not need to also own a vessel to hold QS. They can sell all of their QP without fishing them.

Vessels fishing in the shore based IFQ program must have a human observer or electronic monitoring cameras installed on board to monitor catch and account for discards. IFQ vessels must deliver landings to a buyer with a FRSL, and a catch monitor (CM) must be present for the offload to monitor sorting and independently account for landings. All three reports (discards,

landings recorded by the first receiver, and landings recorded by the CM) are submitted to the online vessel account system, and are debited from the vessel account. Typically, the first receiver and CM will record the same landed values, but if there is a discrepancy, the higher value is debited until the discrepancy can be resolved and updated. All fish caught in the IFQ program (landings and discards) are counted against the vessel account, and vessel owners must obtain QP to cover all catch. Vessels that incur a deficit cannot fish in the IFQ program until the deficit is cured, and the deficit must be cured within 30 days to avoid a violation.

In order to comply with the MSA, NMFS tracks the ownership interest (OI) of all entities who own a QS permit/account or a vessel account. QS Permit owners are held to set accumulation and control limits, both at the initial allocation stage and during the operation of the program, and vessel owners must comply with vessel limits for each account. The Council as part of Amendment 20 adopted these ownership and control limits.

In the MS sector, MS/CVs were allocated catch shares of whiting, called catch history assignments (CHA), which were attributed to qualifying limited entry trawl permits based on MS/CV at-sea whiting delivery history in the qualifying years. These limited entry trawl permits were issued an MS/CV endorsement and individual catch history assignment, expressed as a percentage. MS/CV-endorsed LEP owners may choose to participate in the coop or non-coop fishery. Catcher vessels registered to trawl LEPs, and landed at-sea to vessels registered to MS permits catches the whiting associated with the CHA on the MS/CV-endorsed LEP. As with the shore based IFQ sector, NMFS tracks the OI of all entities who own an MS/CV-endorsed trawl LEP or MS permit.

In the C/P sector, NMFS did not make an allocation of catch shares to the individual vessels. Instead, the C/P coop receives a total allocation of Pacific whiting and other non-whiting groundfish species, and organizes independently as a cooperative to harvest the allocation.

Current operations

The trawl rationalization program was implemented in January 2011 and continues to operate consistent with regulations given at 50 CFR 660. Since that time, the Council and NMFS have been addressing implementation issues as they arise, through the public Council process.

Under the trawl rationalization program, new permits, accounts, endorsements, and licenses were established. These consist of: QS permits/accounts, vessel accounts, first receiver site licenses (FRSLs), MS endorsements on certain limited entry trawl permits, MS/CV endorsements on certain limited entry trawl permits, C/P endorsements on certain limited entry trawl permits, one or more MS coop permits, and a C/P coop permit.

NMFS collects information from program participants required to: establish new permits, accounts, and licenses; renew permits, accounts, and licenses; allow trading of QS percentages and QP in online QS and vessel accounts and allow transfer of catch history assignments between limited entry trawl permits; track compliance with program control limits; and implement other features of the regulations pertaining to permits and licenses.

Rulemakings that have affected the collection of information

NMFS implemented the trawl rationalization program through two initial sets of rulemakings. NMFS published the initial issuance portion of the final rule 0648-AY68 on October 1, 2010 (75 FR 60868). This rule restructured and clarified the Pacific coast groundfish regulations to more closely track the organization of the management measures that establish the allocations and procedures set forth under Amendment 21 for initial issuance of permits, endorsements, quota shares, and catch history assignments under the IFQ and coop programs. NMFS published the program components portion of the final rule 0648-AY68 on December 15, 2010 (75 FR 78344) to implement the key components of the trawl rationalization program for the start of the 2011 fishery, including: IFQ gear switching, observer programs, retention requirements, equipment requirements, catch monitors, catch weighing requirements, coop permits, coop agreement requirements, first receiver site licenses, quota share (QS) accounts, vessel accounts, further tracking and monitoring components, and economic data collection requirements. Most of the information collections under OMB Control No. 0648-0620 stemmed from this rulemaking.

Since the initial implementation of the trawl rationalization program in January 2011, the Council and NMFS have been addressing implementation issues as they develop, and trailing actions and subsequent rulemakings have revised or added to the program. NMFS published the program improvement and enhancement (PIE) 1 final rule on December 1, 2011 (76 FR 74725). This rulemaking included an FMP amendment to further revise Amendment 21 (Amendment 21-1). Regulatory revisions included: the Pacific halibut trawl bycatch mortality limit; clarification that Amendment 21 supersedes limited entry/open access allocations for certain groundfish species; revisions to the observer coverage requirement while a vessel is in port and before the offload is complete; revisions to the electronic fish ticket reporting requirements; revisions to the first receiver site license requirement; further clarification on moving between limited entry and open access fisheries; a process for end-of-the-year vessel account reconciliation; and an exemption from processing at sea for qualified participants in the Shore based IFQ Program.

With the PIE 1 rulemaking, NMFS requested a revision to OMB Control No. 0648-0620, which was approved without change on December 2, 2011. The collection revision included a change to the definition of a first receiver under the IFQ program, and therefore a change to the pool of applicants, and updated the application requirements for first receiver site license holders to exclude the unnecessary request for a site inspection. NMFS removed account managers from QS and vessel accounts/applications, and clarified regulations to explain what would constitute a change in ownership for QS permit and vessel account owners. In addition, a new provision allowed permit owners to request a change in the registration of the MS/CV endorsement, associated CHA from one trawl limited entry permit to another (called severability in Council Documents), and clarified MS/CV-endorsed permit combinations, which resulted in a new collection to document these registration changes. This new provision also affected the MS coop permit application collection, because a permit owner could now have multiple, distinct MS/CV endorsements and associated CHA amounts registered to one trawl limited entry permit, and must obligate each separately. The updated form provided a new space for applicants to designate the specific MS/CV endorsements and associated CHA amounts separately. NMFS

requested a non-substantive change to OMB Control No. 0648-0620, which was approved without change on February 15, 2012 and did not align or result from any rulemaking. The collection was changed to include a required form for vessel account registration, in contrast to the previously optional form. This helped to standardize the information NMFS received from new vessel account applicants. The non-substantive change also added a small business certification section to the existing trawl ownership interest form and first receiver site license form, in order to assist with Regulatory Impact Reviews (RIR)/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) for the trawl rationalization program.

Two additional rulemakings, referred to as Reconsideration of Allocation of Whiting (RAW), Rules 1 and 2 (RAW 1 and RAW 2, respectively), were the outcome of a lawsuit, *Pacific Dawn v. Bryson*, No. C10-4829 TEH (N.D. Cal.) (*Pacific Dawn*), which challenged the initial allocations of whiting under the trawl rationalization program. NMFS published the RAW 1 final rule on August 1, 2012 (77 FR 45508). This was a temporary, emergency action rule, which delayed transfers of QS between QS permits/accounts, and delayed the change in the registration of the MS/CV endorsements and associated Catch History Assignments (CHAs) from one trawl limited entry permit to another (severability). The rule also delayed divestiture requirements, and modified issuance provisions for QP for the beginning of the 2013-fishing year to preserve NMFS' ability to deposit the appropriate final amounts into IFQ accounts based on any recalculation of QS allocations. The emergency action rule was extended on January 17, 2013 (78 FR 3848).

NMFS published the RAW 2 final rule on March 28, 2013 (78 FR 18879). After reviewing the entire record, including the Council's record and comments received on the proposed rule (78 FR 72), NMFS determined that the existing initial whiting allocations provided for a fair and equitable allocation and were consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the groundfish fishery management plan, the court's order in *Pacific Dawn*, and other applicable law. The final rule did not make any changes to initial allocations, but did revise several provisions of the trawl rationalization program and supersede regulatory delays and/or revisions established through temporary emergency action and extension. Changes in the final rule included: transfer of QS or individual bycatch quota (IBQ) (except for widow rockfish QS) between QS permit holders in the shore based IFQ fishery beginning January 1, 2014; a requirement that QS permit holders in the shore based IFQ fishery holding QS or IBQ in excess of the accumulation limits divest themselves of excess QS (except for widow rockfish QS) or IBQ by November 30, 2015; limited entry trawl permit holders in the MS fishery to request a change (or transfer) of MS/CV-endorsement and CHA beginning September 1, 2014; a requirement that MS/CV-endorsed trawl limited entry permit owners divest themselves of ownership in permits in excess of the accumulation limits by August 31, 2016; and extension of the divestiture period delay and moratorium on transfer of widow rockfish QS in the shore based IFQ fishery indefinitely. These rulemakings did not affect or change the previously approved collections under OMB Control No. 0648-0620, but instead further delayed QS transfer and change of registration for MS/CV endorsement and associated catch history assignment.

At its April 2012 meeting, the Council took final action to refine the trawl rationalization

program, resulting in a second program improvement and enhancement (PIE 2) rulemaking, 0648-BD31 (78 FR 68764). The rule implemented specific QS permit application and QS transfer regulations, clarified exemptions for lenders from control rules, eliminated the double-filing of coop reports for the at-sea whiting coops, revised first receiver site license requirements, including site inspection and expiration date, removed the year-end ban on QP transfers between vessel accounts, and clarified that the MS/CV processor obligation could be to more than one MS permit. With the PIE 2 rulemaking, NMFS requested an extension and revision to OMB Control No. 0648-0620, which was approved without change on November 15, 2013. The collection revision included items that had always been in the collection but were not fully developed under the initial program, such as QS permit applications and QS transfers.

At its April 2015 meeting, the Council took final action for the IFQ sector to clarify revocation protocols for cases where QS permit owners who exceeded an accumulation limit did not voluntarily divest to these limits by the November 30, 2015 divestiture deadline. As part of this action, the Council identified a situation where QS permit owners who were over the aggregate non-whiting control limit (a limit for the total amount of QS that can be owned across IFQ species) may not be able to find a willing recipient to take their excess QS. The Council recommended that QS permit owners in this situation could abandon unwanted excess QS to NMFS if they were unable to find another recipient. In order to implement this and other provisions relating to divestiture, NMFS published the divestiture rule, 0648-BF11 (80 FR 69138), allowing a process by which QS permit owners over the aggregate limit could abandon excess shares to NMFS by November 1, 2015 - or, in 2016 and beyond, within 90 days if found to exceed the limit after the divestiture deadline. With the divestiture rulemaking, NMFS requested a revision to OMB Control No. 0648-0620 to add an abandonment form, which was approved without change on November 12, 2015.

At its November 2018 meeting, the Council took final action to recommend setting an accumulation limit on the number of C/P endorsed permits to a maximum of five permits that any one individual or entity may own. This accumulation limit would only take effect in the event the current co-operative structure for the sector dissolves. Currently owners of Shore based IFQ and Mothership vessel categories are required to provide ownership interest information when applying for or renewing permits. This information is not collected for C/P permit owners under the current C/P co-op structure. The recommended action would create similar collection of ownership information requirements for C/P permit owners that would take effect January 1, 2020.

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.

1) QS Permit/Account Application Form

This form must be submitted on paper, by mail, one time, by new QS permit applicants who want to own QS in the shore based IFQ fishery. The applicant will also be required to submit a trawl identification of OI form, which is described separately (see #8). For each approved

application, NMFS will mail a QS permit with zero QS for each species, and will establish an associated online QS account (with zero QS for each species). Initial QS permit owners were allocated percentages of each IFQ species group based on their catch history during the qualifying period, but new entrants receive zero starting QS on their permits and in their QS accounts, and must obtain QS percentages from other existing QS permit owners by transferring QS percentages through the QS account. The purpose for the information collection is to gather name and contact information for new entities, the ability to include the name and contact information on the physical QS permit, and to verify that the entity is eligible to own a QS permit as outlined in regulation and as certified on their application. NMFS expects an average of **8** new applicants each year. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

2) QS Permit/Account Renewal - Online

This prefilled form will be submitted online once annually by current QS permit owners who wish to renew their QS permit for the following year. The QS permit owner will be required to make any changes necessary to their contact information. The applicant will also be required to review their prefilled OI form as part of the online renewal, which is described separately (see #11). The purpose of the renewal is to maintain current QS permit owner contact information and retain only the pool of permit owners who actively own shares and participate in the IFQ program. NMFS expects an average of **158** online QS permit renewals annually.

Since QS permits and the QPs allocated to renewed permits have high value, NMFS expects all QS permit owners to have significant incentive to renew during the renewal period (October 1 - November 30, online only). Although we expect all QS permit owners to renew online in order to receive their QP allocation for the year, we wanted to build in the possibility that, especially with new QS permit entrants, we might not always see 100% of the renewals submitted on time (see #3).

3) QS Permit/Account Renewal Form

Each year QS permit owners are responsible for renewing their QS permit and account online through their QS account during the renewal period, October 1 – November 30 (see #2). The online account renewal portal was set up to service the majority of renewals during the renewal period, and does not appear in accounts outside of the renewal period. Those permit owners who do not renew their QS permit during the renewal period will have their account inactivated by NMFS at the end of the calendar year, and NMFS will not issue QP to the inactive QS account associated with the non-renewed QS permit for that year. Additionally, QS permit owners with non-renewed permits/accounts are not able to transfer their QS percentages.

NMFS allows QS permit owners who did not renew their QS permit/account during the online renewal period (October 1- November 30) to renew by paper, using the QS permit/account renewal form. Although QS permit owners, who renew their permits outside of the online renewal period will not be issued any QP to their QS account for the remainder of the calendar year, submitting this paper application form reactivates their QS account and allows them to transfer QS percentages once their permit is renewed. Because NMFS anticipates so few

renewals outside of the renewal period, and because there is a high cost associated with creating an online renewal option outside of the renewal period, a paper form is a simple alternative.

This QS permit/account renewal form will be submitted on paper, by mail, one time, by QS, permit renewal applicants who failed to renew on time, but who want the ability to transfer QS percentages. The applicant will also be required to submit a trawl identification of ownership interest form, which is described separately (see #11). The purpose for the information collection is the same as the online renewal (see #2): to maintain current QS permit owner contact information and retain only the pool of permit owners who actively own shares and participate in the IFQ program. NMFS estimates that at most, only **1** QS permit owner will complete this form per year because the QP allocated to renewed permit owners has such high value, and because NMFS has seen such high compliance with QS permit renewals in the past.

4) *QS Transfer*

QS Permit owners own QS percentages (divisible to the thousandth of a percentage, 0.001%) for 29 IFQ species groups. Initially, these percentages were not transferrable, in order to allow the participants a few years to gain greater understanding and confidence with the new program.

Beginning in January 2014, QS permit owners have been able to permanently transfer those QS percentages to other QS permit owners (either existing owners or new entrants) from January 1 to November 30 each year through their online QS account, with the exception of widow rockfish QS, for which QS transfers have been postponed indefinitely. QS Transfers must be initiated by the transferor, and accepted by the transferee to be finalized. QP associated with the QS being transferred will not be part of the QS transfer. QS Transfers are completely separate from QP transfers. QS can only be transferred between QS accounts, and not to vessel accounts, while QP can only be transferred from QS accounts to vessel accounts, and between vessel accounts.

NMFS allocates QP throughout the year, and will allocate QP based on the QS percentages listed on a renewed QS permit. For example, if a QS permit owner started the year with 3.000% of a certain species, and transferred 1.000% to another QS permit owner in that year, s/he would continue to be allocated QP based on the 3.000% until the start of the following year. Essentially, QS permit owners can transfer QS at any time, as many times, and in as many increments as they want between January 1 and November 30. Whatever remains in their QS account on November 30 at midnight will be printed on their renewed permit for the following year. NMFS will allocate QP for the remainder of the following year based on the QS percentages given on the QS permit.

To initiate a QS transfer, the user must log in to the QS account associated with their QS permit, preview their current QS percent ownership, select the species and amount of QS% to transfer, indicate the nature of the transaction (*i.e.*, cash sale, barter), provide the overall cost for the transaction, and select the QS permit/account to transfer to, up to the accumulation limits of the receiving QS permit/account. The cost information collected helps NMFS to understand the nature of the QS sale and relative price information. The burden estimate in Question 12 includes both the time for the transferor to initiate the transfer, and the time for the receiving party to review and accept the QS transfer in their QS account. NMFS programmed the QS percentage

transfer functionality in online QS accounts so that QS permit owners could trade all species in a single transaction, reducing the burden for those participants who do wish to transfer more than one species in a single transaction.

The ability to transfer QS is an important component of the program, allowing NMFS to implement the program as intended by the Council and industry, and allowing for new entrants and a changing fishery. The transfer of QS also allows for individual business flexibility and allows QS permit owners to shape their business strategies through a portfolio of QS. Not every QS permit owner will transfer QS percentages during the fishing year. Based on the average numbers of QS transfers per year over the duration of the IFQ program, NMFS estimates that there will be an average of 4 QS transfers per month, for a total of **48** QS transfers per year.

5) QP Transfer from QS Account to Vessel Account

The QP transfer function from QS account to vessel account will be completed online approximately five times each year by QS permit owners who are moving QP from their QS account to a vessel account (average of 167 QS permit owners x 5 QP transfers = **835** responses per year). Because NMFS allocates pounds to QS accounts at different times throughout the calendar year, the QS permit owner must login to their QS account several times per year to move the QP to a vessel account. While some QS owners may wait until the spring when most QP has been allocated to the shore based IFQ sector to transfer their QP to vessel accounts (decreasing the average number of transfers), others may make QP transfers to multiple vessels directly from their QS accounts (increasing the average number of transfers).

To initiate a QP transfer from a QS account, the user must log in to the QS account associated with their QS permit, preview their current available QP, enter the species and amount of QP to transfer (in pounds), indicate the nature of the transaction (*i.e.*, cash sale, barter), provide the overall cost for the transaction, and select the vessel account to transfer to (, up to the vessel limits of the receiving vessel account).. The cost information collected helps NMFS to understand the nature of the QP sale and relative price information. The burden estimate in Question 12 also includes the time for the receiving party to review and accept the QP transfer in their vessel account. QP transfer functionality is an important accounting tool for both NMFS and industry. The QS account system provides accurate balances of QPs available for use (to transfer to a vessel account) in real time, and documents the initiation and acceptance of individual QP transfer transactions. Currently, users may print the transfer summary PDFs in their accounts to demonstrate a transfer has been made to brokers or receiving parties.

6) Vessel Account Registration Request

This form will be submitted on paper, by mail, one time, by new vessel account applicants who own a vessel registered to a trawl LEP limited entry permit, and want to harvest or hold QP in the shore based IFQ fishery. The applicant will also be required to submit a trawl identification of OI ownership interest form, which is described separately (see #10). For each approved vessel account registration request, NMFS will establish a vessel account with zero QP for each species, and the vessel owner will obtain QP from a QS permit owner's QS account or other vessel account. The purpose for the information collection is to gather name and contact information for new entities, and to correctly establish the vessel name/number and vessel owner name on the

account for correct catch accounting by first receivers, CMs catch monitors, and observers in the shore based IFQ fishery. NMFS expects, on average, to have about **10** new applicants each year. That estimate is based on the number of new vessel account entrants we have seen each year since the start of the program in 2011.

7) Vessel Account Renewal – Online

This prefilled form will be submitted online once annually by current vessel account owners who wish to renew their vessel account for the following year. The vessel account owner will be required to make any changes necessary to their contact information on the renewal form. The applicant will also be required to review their prefilled OI information as part of the online renewal, which is described separately (see #11). The purpose of the renewal is to maintain current vessel owner contact information and retain only the pool of vessel owners who actively participate in the IFQ program. NMFS expects an average of **125** online vessel account renewals annually.

There are currently 125 active, renewed vessel accounts. While new applicants may request a registration at any time (see #6), NMFS expects this number to fluctuate above or below that number based on the retirement/destruction of vessels, sale of an active vessel to a new owner, or the entry of a new vessel into the IFQ fishery.

Since these vessel owners that renew their accounts can fish in the shore based IFQ fishery at the start of the year and may receive carryover of any surplus pounds from the previous year, NMFS expects vessel account owners to have significant incentive to renew during the renewal period (October 1 – November 30, online only) if they intend to continue their participation in the program. If for any reason they do not renew online during the renewal period, vessel owners can renew their vessel account by paper after the renewal period (see #8).

8) Vessel Account Renewal Form

Each year vessel account owners are responsible for renewing their vessel account online through their vessel account during the renewal period, October 1 – November 30 (see #7). The online account renewal portal was set up to service the majority of renewals during the renewal period, and does not appear in accounts outside of the renewal period. Those account owners who do not renew their vessel account during the renewal period will have their account inactivated by NMFS at the end of the calendar year, cannot fish in the shore based IFQ fishery, cannot transfer QP (except in the case of a deficit), and will not be issued any carryover of surplus QP from the previous year, if eligible.

NMFS allows vessel account owners who did not renew their vessel account during the online period (October 1 -- November 30) to renew by paper, on the vessel account renewal form.

Although vessel account owners who renew their accounts outside of the online renewal period are not issued any carryover of surplus QP from the previous year, submittal (and NMFS acceptance) of this paper renewal form would reactivate their account and allow them to fish in the shore based IFQ fishery and transfer QP. Because NMFS anticipates so few renewals outside of the renewal period, and because there is a high cost associated with creating an online renewal option outside of the renewal period, a paper form is a simple alternative.

This vessel account renewal form will be submitted on paper, by mail, one time, by vessel account renewal applicants who failed to renew online on time, but who want the ability to fish in the shore based IFQ fishery and transfer QP. NMFS estimates that at most, **6** vessel account owners will complete this form per year because we expect so many to renew on time online, and because we have seen high compliance with vessel account renewals in the past. This estimate is based on the average number of vessel owners who have renewed their account by mail after the renewal period in previous years. The vessel account owner would also be required to submit a trawl identification of OI ownership interest form, which is described separately (see #11). The purpose for the information collection is the same as the online renewal (see #7): to maintain current vessel owner contact information and retain only the pool of vessel owners who actively participate in the IFQ program.

9) QP Transfer from Vessel Account to Vessel Account

The QP transfer function allows vessel owners to transfer QPs online from their vessel account to another vessel account. Based on actual vessel account transfer activity, NMFS estimates that vessel account owners will average 11 transfers of QP from their vessel account to another vessel account each year (average of 141 vessel account owners x 11 transfers of QP = **1,551** responses per year). Many vessel owners do not make any QP transfers to other vessel accounts during the year, but others, such as vessel accounts being used for risk pool and broker purposes, make many.

To initiate a QP transfer from a vessel account, the user will login to their vessel account, preview their current available QP, enter the species and amount of QP to transfer (in pounds), indicate the nature of the transaction (*i.e.*, cash sale, barter), provide the overall cost for the transaction, and select the vessel account to transfer to (up to the vessel limits of the receiving vessel account). The cost information collected helps NMFS to understand the nature of the QP sale and relative price information. The burden estimates in question 12 also includes the time for the receiving party to review and accept the QP transfer in their vessel account.

QP transfer functionality is an important accounting tool for both NMFS and industry. The vessel account system provides accurate balances of QPs available for use (to cover catch or to transfer) in real time, and documents the initiation and acceptance of individual QP transfer transactions. Currently, users may print the transfer summary PDFs in their accounts to demonstrate a transfer has been made to brokers or receiving parties.

10) Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: New Entrants

This form is identical to the form used under collection #11 below, however new entrants will likely take longer to complete the form since it will not be prefilled for them, and it will be their first time completing the form, so we separated the collections. This form will be submitted on paper, by mail, one time, by an estimated **22** respondents each year, including:

- **8** new QS permit applicants (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with collection #1),
- **10** new vessel account registrants (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with collection #6),

- **1** applicant who plans to purchase an existing trawl LEP limited entry permit with MS/CV endorsement/CHA (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with change in permit ownership form for the trawl LEP limited entry permit, collected under OMB Control No. 0648-0203), or who owns a trawl permit and plans to purchase an existing MS/CV endorsement/CHA to register to their trawl permit (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with collection #17),
- **1** applicant who plans to purchase an existing MS permit (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with collection #15),
- **1** lender (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with letter of intent to collateralize assets under the trawl rationalization program, and therefore be exempt from accumulation and control limits), and
- **1** C/P endorsed permit owner. Prior to January 1, 2020, C/P endorsed permit owners were not required to complete the trawl identification of ownership interest form. There are currently three fishing companies that own the ten existing C/P permits. Since 2011, only two C/P endorsed permits have changed ownership, once in 2013 and once in 2019. As a result, subsequent years are likely to have less than one new change in C/P permit ownership.

The trawl identification of OI form is collected from new entrants to verify their eligibility to participate in the program, to monitor compliance with accumulation and control limits in the IFQ and MS programs, and to gather small business information to assist with RIR/IRFA regulatory impact reviews (RIR)/initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) for new rulemakings. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

11) Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: Renewal

This form is identical to the form used under collection #10 above, however NMFS separated the collections because the forms are prefilled for renewals and take significantly less time to complete, on average. For renewals where there has been no change to the OI, most applicants (QS permit and vessel account owners) will submit this form online, while some MS/CV-endorsed LEP owners, some MS permit owners, and lenders will be sent a prefilled paper form if they do not also own a QS permit or vessel account where they can approve the OI online. Starting January 1, 2020 owners of C/P endorsed permits were required to complete this form, which was a change from the previous collection. NMFS does not anticipate approving any new C/P endorsed permits. Since 2011, only two C/P endorsed permits have changed ownership, once in 2013 and once in 2019. For these reasons, completion of this form in subsequent years is expected to occur primarily during the C/P permit renewal period (October 1 – November 30), and not applications by new entrants. For any renewal where there was a change to the OI, the participant will need to complete a new form. We have factored the average response time for all response types into our estimated time burden of five minutes: (1) no change, review online; (2) no change, review on paper, and (3) with change, submit new paper form = {[(319 respondents x 3 minutes) + (6 respondents x 5 minutes) + (10 respondents x 10 minutes)] ÷ 335 total respondents} = 3.24 minutes/respondent.

An estimated 335 respondents will submit this form as a part of the renewal application each year, including:

- **159** QS permit owners
- **131** vessel account owners
- **34** MS/CV-endorsed LEP limited entry permit owners (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with MS/CV-endorsed LEP limited entry permit renewal, collected under OMB Control No. 0648-0203),
- **6** MS permit owners
- **2** lenders (trawl identification of ownership form submitted with letter of intent to have continued exemption from accumulation and control limits).

3 C/P endorsed permit owners (change). Starting in 2020, C/P permit owners will be required to complete this form. Currently 3 different companies own the ten existing C/P endorsed permits. The trawl identification of OI ownership interest form is collected during renewals to maintain verification of their eligibility to participate in the program, to monitor compliance with accumulation and control limits, and to gather small business information to assist with regulatory impact reviews (RIR)/initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) for new rulemakings. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

12) First Receiver Site License Application Form: New Entrants

This form is identical to the form used under collection #13 below; however, NMFS separated the collections because initial applicants have an increased burden estimate when compared to re-registering applicants. A first receiver is a person or company who receives, purchases, or takes custody, control, or possession of catch onshore from a vessel that harvested fish under the IFQ program. All buyers must hold a FRSL for each physical landing site in order to receive a landing of IFQ species. A single company may have multiple landing sites, each of which requires its own license. New first receiver applicants who want to receive shore based IFQ landings from vessels with IFQ vessel accounts will submit this form online, one time initially. NMFS estimates about **6** responses per year, based on new applications submitted during the last several years of the program.

In addition to the application form, the applicant will also be required to submit an application fee, a copy of their current state buyer's license for the state in which the license will be held, and a catch monitor plan (CMP), which will be followed by a site visit. All of these application requirements are included in the burden estimate. The CMP is the most time-consuming component of the application, because it requires a write-up of the operations of the receiving facility, including information on offloading, sorting, weighing, and labeling catch, as well as information for CM safety. NMFS provides guidelines and a template for the CMP to each applicant to ease some of the time burden. All new FRSL will also be required to submit a site inspection conducted by the CM Coordinator from Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission who visits the site for approximately one hour, but longer, if necessary, to ensure that the CMP accurately represents the receiving process in the facility. After a site inspection, the applicant may be required to revise their CMP.

The information on the FRSL application form is collected to gather name and contact information for new FRSL holders, name and contact information at the physical site listed on the license to ensure that the name on the application matches the name on the fish tickets for

accounting and enforcement purposes, and to register the name and contact information on the physical FRSL. The application fee is collected to cover costs associated with processing FRSLs, as calculated in the unit cost computation. The copy of the state buyer's license is collected in order to ensure that the first receiver is eligible to receive fish in that state, and is complying with state requirements.

13) First Receiver Site License Application Form: Re-Registration

This form is identical to the form used under collection #12 above; however, NMFS separated the collections because the application process takes significantly less time to complete for re-registering applicants. Each first receiver applicant who wants to re-register their existing FRSL first receiver site license in order to continue receiving shore based IFQ landings from vessels with IFQ vessel accounts will submit this form online, one time each year. NMFS estimates about **43** responses per year, based on re-registrations submitted during the last several years of the program.

The re-registering applicant will also be required to submit an application fee, a copy of their current state buyer's license for the state in which the license will be held, and a CMP catch monitor plan. A site inspection will only be required once every three years in order to reduce the burden for re-registering applicants (site inspections were required every year when the program started, but NMFS relaxed the requirement through the PIE 2 rulemaking). All of these application requirements are included in the burden estimate. For re-registering applicants, the CMP catch monitor plan takes less time to submit (as compared to new entrants) because they have their plan from the previous year saved. The first receiver simply needs to update any information that has changed, and resubmit.

The information on the FRSL first receiver site license application form is collected to maintain name and contact information for new first receivers, and to be able to include the name and updated contact information on the physical FRSL first receiver site license. NMFS requires re-registration in order to ensure the pool of participants are still actively participating and complying with program requirements. The application fee is collected to cover costs associated with processing FRSLs first receiver site licenses, as calculated in the unit cost computation. The copy of the state buyer's license is collected in order to ensure that the first receiver is still eligible to receive fish in that state, and is complying with state requirements. The CMP catch monitor plan is required as part of the collection to ensure that every IFQ species is accurately sorted and counted to a vessel account under the IFQ program and that the site follows proper safety procedures while a CM catch monitor is present. Re-registering applicants must submit the CMPCM plan each year to recertify that the plan is accurate, and in order to submit any changes to the operating procedures, if applicable. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

14) Mothership Permit Renewal Form

Each year MS permit owners are responsible for renewing their MS permit during the renewal period, October 1 – November 30. This form will be submitted online, once yearly, with a permit renewal fee and a completed trawl identification of OI form (see #11), which is prefilled so that

owners can verify or update their ownership interest.

There are **6** MS permit owners, and **no new** MS permits will be given since this is a limited entry permit. NMFS anticipates that all 6 will submit their renewal application each year, based on previous behavior, the extremely high value of the permits, and the business arrangements associated with the MS permits/vessels registered to the permits in the MS coop. New entrants may become MS permit owners only by transferring an existing permit (see #15). The purpose for the information collection is to maintain current MS permit owner contact information and OI information.

15) Mothership Permit Change of Vessel Registration, Permit Owner, or Vessel Owner Application Form

If an MS permit owner would like to change the vessel registered to their MS permit, change the permit owner on their MS permit, or notify NMFS of a change in vessel owner of the vessel registered to their MS permit, they can submit the MS permit change of vessel registration, permit owner, or vessel owner application form on paper, by mail, but since the Covid pandemic electronic submission through email has become the norm. This form can be submitted at any time during the calendar year. This form can be submitted at any time during the calendar year. NMFS anticipates a maximum of **1** MS transfer per year, based on permit transfers in the first five years of the program. If a new entrant obtains an MS permit, they must submit this form with a trawl identification of OI form to verify ownership of the permit.

The purpose for this collection of information is to gather accurate information about the MS permit ownership and the vessel registered to the permit. The form provides formal certification and documentation of the request and allows NMFS to review the request for compliance with permit regulations. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

16) Mothership Cooperative Permit Application Form

The MS coop permit application form may be completed by one or more MS coops, or not at all if a coop does not organize in a given year. For the entirety of the program, there has been a single coop with all MS/CV-endorsed LEP limited entry permit owners given as members, with no non-coop fishery. For the purposes of this collection, NMFS estimates that there will be **1** coop completing this form per year.

The MS coop permit application must be completed by the coop manager, and can be submitted on paper, by mail, but since the Covid pandemic electronic submission through email has become the norm. A complete application includes the MS coop permit application form and a copy of the MS coop agreement. Additionally, the MS coop must provide an annual coop report. Through the application form, the MS coop identifies their members (MS/CV-endorsed LEP limited entry permit owners), the individual Catch History Assignments (CHAs) associated with each MS/CV-endorsed permit and to which MS permit the CHAs are obligated, the total CHA for the coop, and the vessels that will harvest the whiting as part of the coop. The MS coop agreement provides further detail about the terms and conditions agreed to by coop members, and how the allocation of whiting to the MS sector will be fished. The annual coop report details

the status of the MS coop fishery during the prior year.

This annual collection provides NMFS the information necessary to allocate whiting and bycatch to the MS sector. Whether there is a single coop, multiple coops, and/or a coop and non-coop fishery in a given year, the MS coop permit application provides the formal process to convey the structure of the at-sea MS sector, and therefore determines the allocation mechanism. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

17) Change of MS/CV-Endorsement and Catch History Assignment Registration Application Form

Since 2014, MS/CV endorsements and their associated CHA are severable from a limited entry trawl permit, and eligible to be registered to any other limited entry trawl permit, up to the accumulation limits. If an MS/CV-endorsed LEP limited entry permit owner would like to change the registration of the MS/CV endorsement and associated CHA to another limited entry trawl permit, they can submit the MS/CV-endorsement and CHA registration application form on paper, by mail, but since the Covid pandemic electronic submission through email has become the norm. This form can be submitted during the registration period, September 1 – December 31 each year. If a new entrant obtains an MS/CV endorsement and CHA, they must submit this form with a trawl identification of OI ownership interest form (#11) to verify ownership of the permit to which the endorsement and CHA will be registered. NMFS estimates **1** MS/CV- endorsement/CHA transfer per year, based on the number of transfers we have seen since 2014.

The purpose for this collection of information is to allow the transfer of MS/CV endorsements and CHA among limited entry trawl permits, and to gather accurate information about MS/CV-endorsed permit ownership. The form provides formal certification and documentation of the request by the permit owner (transferor) and allows NMFS to review the request for compliance with the accumulation limits and with other permit regulations. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

18) Catcher/Processor Cooperative Permit Application Form

The C/P coop permit application form must be submitted by the single C/P coop each year (one form submitted each year), so NMFS expects **1** response per year. The C/P coop permit application is completed by the coop manager, and can be submitted on paper, by mail, but since the Covid, pandemic electronic submission through email has become the norm... A complete application includes the C/P coop permit application form and a copy of the C/P coop agreement. Additionally, the C/P coop must provide an annual coop report. The C/P coop identifies their members (owners of CP endorsed permits) through the application form, and provides further detail about the terms and conditions that coop members have through the C/P coop agreement. The annual coop report details the status of the C/P coop fishery during the prior year.

This annual collection provides NMFS the information necessary to allocate whiting and bycatch to the C/P sector, and allows for updated contact information to be printed on the permit. Failure

to provide this information would require NMFS to change the fishery from a coop-based fishery to an IFQ fishery. In the previous submissions of this collection, we have required this form be notarized, but have removed that requirement to minimize reporting burden.

19) Material Change

If there are any changes to a coop agreement, the coop manager of either an MS coop or a C/P coop must notify NMFS in writing of any material change to the coop agreement within seven calendar days of such changes. Within 30 calendar days, the designated coop manager must submit to NMFS a revised coop agreement with a letter (by mail or email) that describes such changes. There is not a form for this collection, and NMFS estimates **1** response per year. NMFS will review the material changes and provide a response letter to the coop manager that either accepts the changes as given, or does not accept the revised coop agreement. If the changes are not accepted, the letter from NMFS will explain why. The coop will be required to resubmit the coop agreement with further revisions that respond to NMFS' concerns. NMFS requires this notification because the coops serve to manage the harvest of whiting through a coop agreement with their members, and NMFS relies on the coops for effective management of the MS and C/P sectors. The coop agreement is the mechanism to effectively manage the fishing activities, including the monitoring and enforcement activities within the coop. Any changes must be provided to NMFS to ensure that the written agreement matches the practice of the coops.

20) QS Abandonment Request

At the time of initial QS allocation in 2011, several eligible QS permit owners received QS percentages that exceeded the shore based IFQ program's accumulation limits. These permit owners were provided an adjustment period where they could continue to hold these excess shares, but were required to completely divest of QS in excess of the accumulation limits by November 30, 2015 (see 50 CFR 660.140 (d)(4)(v) at [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-660/section-660.140#p-660.140\(d\)\(4\)\(v\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/part-660/section-660.140#p-660.140(d)(4)(v))). Through the divestiture rule, NMFS established an abandonment form where QS permit owners who exceeded the aggregate non- whiting control limit could permanently abandon shares of their choosing to NMFS. No one used the provision, and the divestiture period has ended, but NMFS kept this form in place (through the divestiture rule) should any QS permit owner be found to exceed the aggregate nonwhiting QS limit in 2016 or beyond.

Permit owners utilizing this provision in the future would submit a written request (via mail or email) identifying their QS permit number, the IFQ species they wish to abandon, and the percentage of each species to abandon. NMFS will notify the permit owner that s/he has 90 days to divest of the QS in excess of the

21) Shore based scales / First Receivers- Reports

Shore based scales are printed scale reports made available to the catch monitor and, upon request, to NMFS. For scales used to weigh catch at IFQ first receivers, all scales identified in a catch monitoring plan must produce a printed record for each delivery, or portion of a delivery, weighed on that scale, unless specifically exempted by NMFS (scales not designed for automatic bulk weighing may be exempted from part or all of the printed record requirements). A first

receiver must maintain printed scale reports on site until the end of the fishing year during which the printouts were made and make them available upon request by NMFS for 3 years after the end of the fishing year during which the printout was made.

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.

The collection involves the use of mostly online/electronic collection of information.

These collections are conducted online exclusively:

- QS Permit/Account Renewal – Online
- QS Transfer
- QP Transfer from QS Account to Vessel Account
- Vessel Account Renewal – Online
- QP Transfer from Vessel Account to Vessel Account
- Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: Renewal
- First Receiver Site License Application Form: New Entrants
- First Receiver Site License Application Form: Re-Registration
- Mothership Permit Renewal Form
- Catcher/Processor Cooperative Permit Application Form

These collections are conducted by paper, but can be submitted electronically via email:

- QS Permit/Account Application Form
- QS Permit/Account Renewal Form – only necessary if the permit owner misses the 2-month online renewal period
- Vessel Account Registration Request
- Vessel Account Renewal Form – only necessary if the permit owner misses the 2-month online renewal period
- Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: New Entrants
- Mothership Permit Change of Vessel Registration, Permit Owner, or Vessel Owner Application Form
- Mothership Cooperative Permit Application Form
- Change of MS/CV-Endorsement and Catch History Assignment Registration Application Form
- Material Change
- QS Abandonment Request
- Shore based scales / First Receivers Scale Reports

While the “conducted by paper” list looks similar to those conducted online, each paper form listed has fewer responses in comparison.

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.

This is a unique information collection and does not duplicate other collections. The trawl rationalization program was developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council and is unique to the commercial Pacific coast trawl fisheries. The program was, and continues to be, reviewed in many public meetings and is subject to public comment. The program and associated information collection is specific to a section of the Pacific coast commercial fishing industry. The information collected is required to implement and administer the program.

The requirement for recordkeeping of dispositions applies only to this program's first receivers.

Additionally, NMFS strives to share the information internally to avoid duplication. Various internal NMFS groups such as OLE, the economic data collection (EDC) team, the observer program, the catch monitor program, etc. use the contact information collected by the Fisheries Permit Office as part of this collection, rather than collecting this information again.

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

Many of the respondents are small businesses. NMFS minimizes burden by having instant QS and QP transactions online, that do not involve mailing paperwork, and provides prefilled forms wherever possible so that small business owners and others only need to correct information if something has changed rather than fill out the same information each time. Wherever possible, NMFS tries to pair information collections (such as renewals and OI) to be due on the same date to minimize burden on affected entities.

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.

QS Permit/Account Application Form, QS Permit/Account Renewal - Online, QS Permit/Account Renewal Form, Vessel Account Registration Request, Vessel Account Renewal Form, Vessel Account Renewal – Online, Mothership Permit Renewal Form, First Receiver Site License Application Form: New Entrants, First Receiver Site License Application Form: Re-Registration

Initial application information and annual renewal/re-registration information collection is necessary to confirm current address, contact and ownership information, and to maintain accurate registrations of the permits/licenses and/or accounts. If the collection is not conducted, or conducted less frequently, over time the permit information would become outdated. Often, permit and/or account owners will make a change to their entity name and forget to notify NMFS. The, and the initial registration and subsequent renewal period has become the time to update all of our records and maintain a high quality of data. Many line offices rely on the contact information that the Fisheries Permit Office collects as a part of registrations/renewals, and less accurate or less frequent information collection would negatively affect other offices. NMFS strives to make significant outreach efforts and a high-quality data set is essential to ensuring communication and compliance. Additionally, in the case of the FRSL first receiver site license, if the collection was not conducted or conducted less frequently, it would hinder NMFS' ability to effectively examine the safety of a site for a CM catch monitor, and know where IFQ landings would occur.

Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: New Entrants, Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: Renewal

Ownership interest forms must be submitted as part of the initial registrations and subsequent renewals listed above, as well as with initial registrations and renewals of MS/CV-endorsed LEPs limited entry permits (both of which are part of a separate collection, OMB Control No. 0620- 0203). The OI information is collected to determine compliance with the accumulation limits. If NMFS was not able to conduct such collections, or to conduct such collections less frequently, NMFS would not be able to track changes in shareholders or shareholder OI amounts over time, and participants would have less motivation to stay within the accumulation limits. The accumulation limits are provided to meet the legal mandate under MSA, which requires that individuals and/or entities should not receive access to a disproportionate amount of the resource. It makes sense to collect this information in tandem with the annual renewals of permits/accounts because participants are accustomed to submitting information to NMFS at this time of year, in the months preceding the next groundfish season.

QS Transfer, QP Transfer from QS Account to Vessel Account, QP Transfer from Vessel Account to Vessel Account

The transfer of assets (QS and QP) under the trawl rationalization program is important for business entities and the government. Collecting this information less frequently, by perhaps setting short periods during the year when these transfers could be made, would hinder the flexibility the shore-based trawl program was intended to create for ease of business transactions. QS and vessel accounts function just like savings and checking accounts, and while these transfers are a collection of information by a Federal agency, they are a necessary business function for fishing and purposes, just like the transfer of money between bank accounts. The QS/QP accounting system is critical to the execution of the fishery and the benefits of the trawl rationalization program cannot be realized without a real-time accounting system that allows for the transfer of QS and QP. Business owners need confirmation of transactions for their private business agreements, and NMFS needs the information to track in-season balances and compliance with regulations.

Mothership Permit Change of Vessel Registration, Permit Owner, or Vessel Owner Application Form, Change of MS/CV-Endorsement and Catch History Assignment Registration Application Form

Because permits and endorsements convey a conditional privilege given by NMFS, any transfer of such privilege to another permit owner or vessel owner must be formally registered with NMFS. Permit owner, vessel owner, vessel registration, and endorsement registration information are important in enforcing management regulations, providing authorized participants with notice of fishery information during the season, and providing analysts with high quality permit data.

Mothership Cooperative Permit Application Form, Catcher/Processor Cooperative Permit Application Form, Mutual Agreement Exception, Mothership Withdrawal, Material Change

The MS and C/P coops serve to manage the harvest of whiting through a coop agreement with all

members, and NMFS relies on the coops for effective management of the at-sea sectors. The coop permits, and specifically the coop agreements that must be submitted with the coop permit applications, are the mechanism to effectively manage the fishing activities, including the monitoring and enforcement activities within the coop. Any changes must be provided to NMFS to ensure that the written agreement matches the practice of the coops. These collections are essential to managing the participants and any changes in the fishery. Any removal of these collections would result in an undocumented at-sea fishery, while any reduction of these collections would allow for a situation in which the information collected by NMFS may not match the practice in the coops.

QS Abandonment Request

If this collection were not conducted, QS permit owners would not have as much flexibility for abandoning QS percentages in excess of the control limit for aggregate nonwhiting QS holdings, as provided for in regulation. This information collection is voluntary.

Catch Monitoring Plans/ First Receivers - Preparation and Submission, Catch Monitoring Plans/ First Receivers – Inspection, Shore based scales/ First Receivers- Inspection, Shore based scales/ First Receivers- Reports

Data collected by certified observers and catch monitors are necessary for the conservation and management of the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. Maintaining the integrity of the data collections is an important aspect of the trawl rationalization program and assuring that individual catch accountability is maintained. The trawl fishery is a multispecies fishery in which the allowable harvest levels for some stocks (potentially including overfished species) constrain access to harvest of the full allocations of many targeted stocks. If the integrity of the monitoring program is not maintained, the elimination of individual accountability could generate an incentive to alter fishing behavior such that vessels target stocks that are more difficult to catch without encountering high levels of constraining species. The high level of quality monitoring under the trawl rationalization program has helped the fleet make tremendous bycatch reductions.

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

Not applicable to this collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

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 Federal Register Notice published on August 7, 2025 (90 FR 38132) solicited public comment. NMFS did not receive any comments in response to the PRA Federal Register Notice for this collection extension.

NOAA consulted with 12 permit and license owners to obtain their views on the need for and practical utility of the data collected, the accuracy of the burden and frequency of collection, suggestions to minimize the burden, and ways to improve the clarity of instructions and forms. NMFS has received comments over the phone from several persons outside the agency about the collections in the proposed extension:

- NMFS staff spoke to 5 QS and vessel account users between November 13 to December 19, 2025 to ask about the time spent on QS and QP transfers. All of them agreed that time NMFS had estimated per QS percent transfer (collection #4), QP transfers [from a QS account to vessel account (collection #5)], or from a vessel account to another vessel account (collection #9) seemed like fair estimates.
- NMFS staff spoke to 3 QS account users between November 13 to December 19, 2025 to ask about the time spent on completing their QS Permit/Account Renewals online (collection #2). All three account owners agreed that the renewal process took them around 10 minutes.
- NMFS staff spoke to 4 FRSL owners between April 1 to April 30, 2025 to ask about the time spent on re-registering their First Receiver Site License online. Two of the respondents agreed that 100 minutes was a fair estimate. One respondent said that it only took her 30 minutes and the last respondents said that it took closer to 2 hours (120 minutes. Responses were variable, but generally within the range of NMFS' estimate.

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

Neither payments nor gifts will be provided to respondents.

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 system of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

Some of the information collected above is confidential under section 402(b) of the MSA. It is also confidential under [NOAA Administrative Order 216-100](#), [NOAA Administrative Order 216-100](#), Protection of Confidential Fisheries Statistics. Not all collections of phone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses are released to the public. Transfer amount and price, tax identification number (TIN), date of birth (DOB), the names of individuals who have an ownership interest in an entity and the percentage of ownership, and cooperative agreements provided with coop permit applications are considered business confidential information. DOB is also protected under the Privacy Act. A statement of the confidentiality of this information is provided on each form.

The information collected is part of a Privacy Act System of Records (SORN), COMMERCE/NOAA #19, Permits and Registrations for United States Federally Regulated Fisheries. Privacy Impact Assessment NOAA4600 covers this information collection.

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.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent	# of Respondents / Year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (in minutes) (d)	Total Annual Burden (e) = (c)*(d/60)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
QS Permit/Account Application & Renewal		167	1	167	10.419	29	\$19.22	\$558
QS Permit/Account Application Form	Fishermen	8	1	8	20	3	\$19.22	\$58
QS Permit/Account Renewal - Online	Fishermen	158	1	158	10	26	\$19.22	\$500
QS Permit/Account Renewal Form	Fishermen	1	1	1	15	0	\$19.22	\$0
First Receiver Site License Application Form: New Entrants	New First Receiver Site License (FRSL) Applicants	6	1	6	200	20	\$37.43	\$749
Mothership Permit Renewal Form	MS Permit Owners	6	1	6	10	1	\$19.22	\$19
Mothership Permit Change of Vessel Registration, Permit Owner, or Vessel Owner Application Form	MS Permit Owners	1	1	1	35	1	\$19.22	\$19
Catcher/Processor Cooperative Permit Application Form	C/P Coop Entity	1	1	1	110	2	\$19.22	\$38
Mothership Cooperative Permit Application Form	MS Coop Entity	1	1	1	230	4	\$19.22	\$77
Material Change to COOP	MS Coop Entity, C/P Coop Entity	1	1	1	150	3	\$19.22	\$58
Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: Renewal	QS Permit Owners (159), Vessel Account Owners (131), MS/CV-Endorsed LEP Owners (34), MS Permit Owners (6), Lenders (2), C/P endorsed permit owners (3)	335	1	335	3	17	\$19.22	\$327
Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: New Entrants	New QS Permit Applicants (8), New Vessel Account Applicants (10), New MS/CV-Endorsed LEP Owners (1), New MS Permit Owners (1), Lenders (1), C/P endorsed permit owners (1)	22	1	22	45	17	\$19.22	\$327
Vessel Account Registrations	Vessel Account Owners	141	1	141	11.0638	26	\$19.22	\$500
Vessel Account Registration Request	New Vessel Account Applicants	10	1	10	15	3	\$19.22	\$58
Vessel Account Renewal - Online	Vessel Account Owners	125	1	125	10	21	\$19.22	\$404
Vessel Account Renewal Form	Vessel Account Owners	6	1	6	15	2	\$19.22	\$38

QP Transfer from QS Account to Vessel Account	QS Permit Owners	167	5	835	5	70	\$19.22	\$1,345
QP Transfer from Vessel Account to Vessel Account	Vessel Account Owners	141	11	1,551	5	129	\$19.22	\$2,479
Change of MS/CV-Endorsement and Catch History Assignment Registration Application Form	MS/CV-Endorsed LEP Owners	1	1	1	35	1	\$19.22	\$19
QS Transfer	QS Permit Owners	48	1	48	10	8	\$19.22	\$154
QS Abandonment Request	QS Permit Owners	1	1	1	10	0	\$19.22	\$0
Shore based Scales/ First Receivers Scale Reports	New FFRSL Applicants and Current FRSL Holders	49	30	1,470	10	245	\$37.43	\$9,170
First Receiver Site License Application Form: Re-Registration	FRSL Holders	43	1	43	100	72	\$37.43	\$2,695
Total for Collection		1131*		4,630		645		\$18,535

*359 Unique Respondents

Totals in ROCIS may be off slightly due to rounding issues.

* Occupational Code 47-5081 (Helpers—Workers) and 45-1011 (First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers) were used to calculate Wage costs. <https://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>

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).

The total estimated annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from this collection is \$7,445.

Information Collection	# of Respondents / Year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Cost Burden / Respondent (h)	Total Annual Cost Burden (i) = (c) x (h)
QS Permit/Account Application & Renewal	167	1	167	\$0.0958	\$16
QS Permit/Account Application Form	8	1	8	\$0.88 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.10 copying)	\$7
QS Permit/Account Renewal - Online	158	1	158	\$0.05 (copying)	\$8

QS Permit/Account Renewal Form	1	1	1	\$0.88 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.10 copying)	\$1
First Receiver Site License Application Form: New Entrants	6	1	6	\$146.30 (\$0.05 copying) (\$146 application fee)	\$878
Mothership Permit Renewal Form	6	1	6	0	\$0
Mothership Permit Change of Vessel Registration, Permit Owner, or Vessel Owner Application Form	1	1	1	\$0.88 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.10 copying)	\$1
Catcher/Processor Cooperative Permit Application Form	1	1	1	0	\$0
Mothership Cooperative Permit Application Form	1	1	1	\$0.88 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.10 copying)	\$1
Material Change to COOP	1	1	1	\$0.88 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.10 copying)	\$1
Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: Renewal	335	1	335	\$0.35 (copying)	\$117
Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: New Entrants	22	1	22	\$0.35 (copying)	\$8
Vessel Account Registrations	141	1	141	0.1347	\$19
Vessel Account Registration Request	10	1	10	\$0.83 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.05 copying)	\$8
Vessel Account Renewal - Online	125	1	125	\$0.05 (copying)	\$6
Vessel Account Renewal Form	6	1	6	\$0.83 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.05 copying)	\$5
QP Transfer from QS Account to Vessel Account	167	5	835	\$0.05 (copying)	\$42
QP Transfer from Vessel Account to Vessel Account	141	11	1,551	\$0.05 (copying)	\$78
Change of MS/CV-Endorsement and Catch History Assignment Registration Application Form	1	1	1	\$0.88 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.10 copying)	\$1

QS Transfer	48	1	48	\$0.05 (copying)	\$2
QS Abandonment Request	1	1	1	\$0.83 (\$0.78 postage) (\$0.05 copying)	\$1
Shore based Scales/ First Receivers Scale Reports	49	30	1,470	0	\$0
First Receiver Site License Application Form: Re-Registration	43	1	43	\$146.05 (\$0.05 copying) (\$146 application fee)	\$6,280
Total for Collection	1131*		4,630		\$7,445

Copying costs are \$0.05 per page.

Totals in ROCIS may be off slightly due to rounding issues.

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 will charge application/renewal fees for certain collections (as outlined above under question 13, column f) to recover some administrative costs. In addition, NMFS will incur ongoing program costs related to the trawl rationalization program which includes staff time to: prepare application and renewal packages, review and process (enter data) incoming registration, transfer and renewal applications, prepare decision documents and permit documents, maintain and improve the IFQ accounting system (QS and vessel accounts), and respond to permit and vessel account owners questions about application, account, and the IFQ program. The estimated net administrative cost accruing to the Federal government is approximately \$515,627.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	ZP-4/Interval 5	\$260,208	5%		\$13,010
Other Federal Positions	ZP-3/Interval 2	\$160,649	95%		\$152,617
Contractor Cost		\$350,000	100%		\$350,000
Travel					
Other Costs:					
TOTAL					\$515,627

The Commerce Alternative Personnel System (CAPS) pay tables (<https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2026-01/CAPS%20Standard%20Pay%20Tables%202026.pdf>) were used to calculate the base salary. The Rest of U.S. locality was used since NOAA employees are geographically dispersed. The upper bound for each interval was used and a multiplier of 1.5 used to determine the loaded salary.

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

Information Collection	Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
QS Permit/Account Application & Renewal	167	183	167	183	29	31	
QS Permit/Account Application Form	8	1	8	1	2.67	0.33	Change in respondents over time
QS Permit/Account Renewal - Online	158	181	158	181	26.33	30.17	Non-renewal of several QS accounts per year
QS Permit/Account Renewal Form	1	1	1	1	0.25	0.25	No change
First Receiver Site License Application Form: New Entrants	6	2	6	2	20	7	Increase in number of applicants over the last 3 years
Mothership Permit Renewal Form	6	6	6	6	1	1	No change
Mothership Permit Change of Vessel Registration, Permit Owner, or Vessel Owner Application Form	1	1	1	1	1	1	No change
Catcher/Processor Cooperative Permit Application Form	1	1	1	1	2	2	No change
Mothership Cooperative Permit Application Form	1	1	1	1	4	4	No change
Material Change to COOP	1	1	1	1	3	3	No change
Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: Renewal	335	368	335	368	17	20	Non-renewal of several QS accounts per year
Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: New Entrants	22	24	22	31	17	23	Change in applicants over time
Vessel Account Registrations	141	153	141	153	26	26	
Vessel Account Registration Request	10	3	10	3	3	0.75	Change in respondents over time
Vessel Account Renewal - Online	125	144	125	144	21	24	Non-renewal of a few vessel accounts per year
Vessel Account Renewal Form	6	6	6	6	1.5	1.5	No change
QP Transfer from QS Account to Vessel Account	167	181	835	690	70	58	Change in responses over time
QP Transfer from Vessel Account to Vessel Account	141	88	1,551	968	129	81	Change in respondents over time

Change of MS/CV-Endorsement and Catch History Assignment Registration Application Form	1	1	1	1	1	1	No change
QS Transfer	48	1	48	1	8	0	Historically variable response rate
QS Abandonment Request	1	1	1	1	0	0	No change
Catch monitoring plans/ First receivers Preparation and Submission	0	43	0	43	0	0	Removed from the collection because it is encompassed in collection the First Receiver Site License Application Form
Catch monitoring plans/ First receivers Inspection	0	43	0	43	0	86	Removed from the collection because it is encompassed in collection the First Receiver Site License Application Form
Shore based Scales/ First receivers Inspection	0	43	0	43	0	43	Removed from the collection because it is encompassed in collection the First Receiver Site License Application Form
Shore based Scales/ First Receivers Scale Reports	49	43	1,470	1,290	245	215	Increase in number of applicants over the last 3 years
First Receiver Site License Application Form: Re-Registration	43	41	43	41	72	68	Overall increase in number of applicants
Total for Collection	1,131	1,225	4,630	3,868	645	670	
Difference	-94		762		-25		

Totals in ROCIS may be off slightly due to rounding issues.

Information Collection	Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	
QS Permit/Account Application & Renewal	\$16	\$10	
QS Permit/Account Application Form	\$7	\$1	Change in respondents over time
QS Permit/Account Renewal - Online	\$8	\$9	Non-renewal of several QS accounts per year
QS Permit/Account Renewal Form	\$1	\$1	Increase in postage costs
First Receiver Site License Application Form: New Entrants	\$878	\$400	Increase in number of applicants and permit fee
Mothership Permit Renewal Form	\$0	\$0	Change to online versus mail
Mothership Permit Change of Vessel Registration, Permit Owner, or Vessel Owner Application Form	\$1	\$1	Increase in postage costs
Catcher/Processor Cooperative Permit Application Form	\$0	\$4	Change to online versus mail
Mothership Cooperative Permit Application Form	\$1	\$5	Change to online versus mail
Material Change	\$0	\$2	Change to online versus mail

Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: Renewal	\$117	\$129	Non-renewal of several QS accounts per year
Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form: New Entrants	\$8	\$11	Change in applicants over time
Vessel Account Registrations	\$20	\$12	
Vessel Account Registration Request	\$8	\$2	Change in respondents over time
Vessel Account Renewal - Online	\$6	\$7	Non-renewal of a few vessel accounts per year
Vessel Account Renewal Form	\$5	\$4	Change in respondents over time and increase in postage costs
QP Transfer from QS Account to Vessel Account	\$42	\$35	Change in responses over time
QP Transfer from Vessel Account to Vessel Account	\$78	\$48	Change in responses over time
Change of MS/CV-Endorsement and Catch History Assignment Registration Application Form	\$1	\$1	Increase in postage costs
QS Transfer	\$2	\$0	Historically variable response rate
QS Abandonment Request	\$1	\$1	Increase in postage costs
Catch monitoring plans/ First receivers Preparation and Submission	\$0	\$0	Removed from the collection because it is encompassed in collection the First Receiver Site License Application Form
Catch monitoring plans/ First receivers Inspection	\$0	\$0	Removed from the collection because it is encompassed in collection the First Receiver Site License Application Form
Shore based Scales/ First receivers Inspection	\$0	\$0	Removed from the collection because it is encompassed in collection the First Receiver Site License Application Form
Shore based Scales/ First Receivers Scale Reports	\$0	\$65	Cost is part of business (printing scale reports)
First Receiver Site License Application Form: Re-Registration	\$6,280	\$8,200	Overall increase in number of applicants
Total for Collection	\$7,445	\$8,921	
Difference		-\$1,476	

Previous burden total differs from ROCIS (\$8,924) due to rounding.

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.

The results from this collection are not planned for use to develop statistical reports or be disseminated to the public.

NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region Sustainable Fisheries Division 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 response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NOAA (*insert line office*) decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

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 agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all 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](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).