



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
THE DIRECTOR

MAY 27 2007

Mr. Donald K. Hansen
Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 North East Ambassador Place
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

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PFMC

Dear Mr.  Hansen:

On January 12, 2007, President Bush signed a bill reauthorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The MSA, as amended, mandates that the Secretary of Commerce (the Secretary) establish a regionally based registry program for recreational fishermen who fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone or for anadromous species. It also requires registration of vessels used in such fishing if appropriate. The registries will assist us to build complete, up-to-date telephone/address directories of marine recreational fishery participants that can be utilized for efficient, cost-effective surveys of recreational fishing effort and, ultimately, catch.

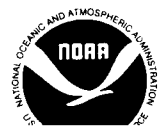
The MSA directs the Secretary to "exempt from registration under the program any recreational fishermen and charter fishing vessels licensed, permitted or registered under the laws of a State if the Secretary determines that information from the State program is suitable for the Secretary's use or is used to assist in completing marine recreational fisheries statistical surveys, or evaluating the effects of proposed conservation and management measures for marine recreational fisheries".

NMFS will be developing the federal program over the coming months. At this time, we have preliminarily identified minimum information for registered anglers that would include:

- State of registration
- Angler name (first name, middle initial, last name, suffix)
- Mailing address of permanent residence (street, city, state, zip code)
- County of permanent residence
- Phone number
- Category of registration (if applicable)
- Effective dates of registration

Minimum information for registered fishing vessels would include:

- Vessel name (if applicable)
- Vessel registration number (State or Coast Guard registration number)
- Name of vessel representative (vessel owner or operator)



- Mailing address of vessel representative (street, city, state, zip code)
- Phone number of vessel representative
- State in which the vessel primarily operates
- County in which the vessel primarily operates
- Port out of which the vessel primarily operates
- Effective dates of registration

In addition to collecting these minimum data elements, State programs must attempt to register all participants to ensure that no individuals are excluded from the directories used for surveys. It will be necessary to include individuals who are often excluded from licensing because of age, military status or residency. Because the data will be used as a foundation for collecting recreational fishing catch and effort data, angler contact information must also be managed in electronic databases that are accessible to NMFS staff. These databases must be kept as up to date as possible to ensure the inclusion of new registrants in the surveys used to produce recreational fishery statistics.

We look forward to working with our State agency partners over the coming months as we further develop and refine the data elements, protocols, and procedures for this registry program. NMFS, in cooperation with the Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions, Regional Fishery Management Councils, State agency partners, and the recreational fishing industry, has already initiated the development of improved data collection programs for marine recreational fisheries. These efforts are heavily dependent upon the development of comprehensive registries of recreational fishing participants. NMFS is fully committed to meeting the requirements of MSA, and I look forward to working with each of our State agency partners to ensure the development of an angler registry program that will meet the needs of all interested parties in an efficient, cost-effective manner.

Sincerely,



William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator
for Fisheries