

## Title 50 —Wildlife and Fisheries

### Chapter VI —Fishery Conservation and Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce

#### Part 600 —Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions

##### Subpart D —National Standards

**Authority:** 5 U.S.C. 561 and 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

**Source:** 61 FR 32540, June 24, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 600.325 National Standard 4—Allocations.

- (a) **Standard 4.** Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different states. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various U.S. fishermen, such allocation shall be:
- (1) Fair and equitable to all such fishermen.
  - (2) Reasonably calculated to promote conservation.
  - (3) Carried out in such manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privileges.
- (b) **Discrimination among residents of different states.** An FMP may not differentiate among U.S. citizens, nationals, resident aliens, or corporations on the basis of their state of residence. An FMP may not incorporate or rely on a state statute or regulation that discriminates against residents of another state. Conservation and management measures that have different effects on persons in various geographic locations are permissible if they satisfy the other guidelines under Standard 4. Examples of these precepts are:
- (1) An FMP that restricted fishing in the EEZ to those holding a permit from state X would violate Standard 4 if state X issued permits only to its own citizens.
  - (2) An FMP that closed a spawning ground might disadvantage fishermen living in the state closest to it, because they would have to travel farther to an open area, but the closure could be justified under Standard 4 as a conservation measure with no discriminatory intent.
- (c) **Allocation of fishing privileges.** An FMP may contain management measures that allocate fishing privileges if such measures are necessary or helpful in furthering legitimate objectives or in achieving the OY, and if the measures conform with paragraphs (c)(3)(i) through (c)(3)(iii) of this section.
- (1) **Definition.** An “allocation” or “assignment” of fishing privileges is a direct and deliberate distribution of the opportunity to participate in a fishery among identifiable, discrete user groups or individuals. Any management measure (or lack of management) has incidental allocative effects, but only those measures that result in direct distributions of fishing privileges will be judged against the allocation requirements of Standard 4. Adoption of an FMP that merely perpetuates existing fishing practices may result in an allocation, if those practices directly distribute the opportunity to participate in the fishery. Allocations of fishing privileges include, for example, per-vessel catch limits, quotas by vessel class and gear type, different quotas or fishing seasons for recreational and commercial fishermen, assignment of ocean areas to different gear users, and limitation of permits to a certain number of vessels or fishermen.

- (2) **Analysis of allocations.** Each FMP should contain a description and analysis of the allocations existing in the fishery and of those made in the FMP. The effects of eliminating an existing allocation system should be examined. Allocation schemes considered, but rejected by the Council, should be included in the discussion. The analysis should relate the recommended allocations to the FMP's objectives and OY specification, and discuss the factors listed in paragraph (c)(3) of this section.
- (3) **Factors in making allocations.** An allocation of fishing privileges must be fair and equitable, must be reasonably calculated to promote conservation, and must avoid excessive shares. These tests are explained in paragraphs (c)(3)(i) through (c)(3)(iii) of this section:
  - (i) **Fairness and equity.**
    - (A) An allocation of fishing privileges should be rationally connected to the achievement of OY or with the furtherance of a legitimate FMP objective. Inherent in an allocation is the advantaging of one group to the detriment of another. The motive for making a particular allocation should be justified in terms of the objectives of the FMP; otherwise, the disadvantaged user groups or individuals would suffer without cause. For instance, an FMP objective to preserve the economic status quo cannot be achieved by excluding a group of long-time participants in the fishery. On the other hand, there is a rational connection between an objective of harvesting shrimp at their maximum size and closing a nursery area to trawling.
    - (B) An allocation of fishing privileges may impose a hardship on one group if it is outweighed by the total benefits received by another group or groups. An allocation need not preserve the status quo in the fishery to qualify as "fair and equitable," if a restructuring of fishing privileges would maximize overall benefits. The Council should make an initial estimate of the relative benefits and hardships imposed by the allocation, and compare its consequences with those of alternative allocation schemes, including the status quo. Where relevant, judicial guidance and government policy concerning the rights of treaty Indians and aboriginal Americans must be considered in determining whether an allocation is fair and equitable.
  - (ii) **Promotion of conservation.** Numerous methods of allocating fishing privileges are considered "conservation and management" measures under section 303 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. An allocation scheme may promote conservation by encouraging a rational, more easily managed use of the resource. Or, it may promote conservation (in the sense of wise use) by optimizing the yield in terms of size, value, market mix, price, or economic or social benefit of the product. To the extent that rebuilding plans or other conservation and management measures that reduce the overall harvest in a fishery are necessary, any harvest restrictions or recovery benefits must be allocated fairly and equitably among the commercial, recreational, and charter fishing sectors of the fishery.
  - (iii) **Avoidance of excessive shares.** An allocation scheme must be designed to deter any person or other entity from acquiring an excessive share of fishing privileges, and to avoid creating conditions fostering inordinate control, by buyers or sellers, that would not otherwise exist.
  - (iv) **Other factors.** In designing an allocation scheme, a Council should consider other factors relevant to the FMP's objectives. Examples are economic and social consequences of the scheme, food production, consumer interest, dependence on the fishery by present participants

and coastal communities, efficiency of various types of gear used in the fishery, transferability of effort to and impact on other fisheries, opportunity for new participants to enter the fishery, and enhancement of opportunities for recreational fishing.

*[61 FR 32540, June 24, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 24234, May 1, 1998]*