

for review and comment prior to tasking staff with analyses.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Helen Allen, 907-271-2809, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: August 21, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,

Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-22003 Filed 8-28-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[I.D. 082096F]

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will hold a meeting of its Bottomfish Task Force.

DATES: The meeting will be held on September 24, 1996, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Executive Center, 1088 Bishop St., Room 4003, Honolulu, HI; telephone: (808) 539-3000.

Council address: Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1405, Honolulu, HI 96813.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director; telephone: (808) 522-8220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The task force will hold its third meeting to discuss and formulate limited entry alternatives for the Mau Zone bottomfish fishery in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and consider other business as required.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, (808) 522-8220 (voice) or (808) 522-8226 (fax), at least 5 days prior to meeting date.

Dated: August 21, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,

Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-22004 Filed 8-28-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[Docket No. 960412111-6229-03; I.D. 080596I]

RIN 0648-ZA20

West Coast Salmon Fisheries; Northwest Emergency Assistance Plan (NEAP)—License Buy Out Program (LBOP)

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of proposed program; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice requests public comment on new bidding options for the 1996 Washington State Salmon Vessel License Buy Out Program (LBOP) to be administered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) through a cooperative agreement with NMFS. The objectives of the program are to provide financial assistance to commercial salmon fishermen adversely impacted by the salmon fishery disaster, and to aid the long-term viability of the fishery resource. This notice also responds to comments submitted on the notice of proposed 1996 LBOP, which was published in the Federal Register on April 23, 1996 (61 FR 17879). In that notice, NMFS announced certain administrative changes to the NEAP and requested comments on proposed NEAP revisions for the Habitat Restoration Program and the Data Collection Jobs Program, as well as the LBOP. On August 1, 1996, NMFS published a Federal Register notice (61 FR 40197) implementing the final program for the Habitat Restoration Jobs Program and Data Collection Jobs Program, and also announced that final decisions on the administration of the 1996 LBOP will be deferred until the public is provided with notice and an opportunity to comment on new bidding options developed as a result of comments received on the initial notice.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before September 27, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Stephen P. Freese, Northwest Emergency Assistance Plan, Trade and Industry Services Division, Northwest Regional Office, National Marine

Fisheries Service, BIN C15700, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Freese, (206) 526-6113.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 2, 1995, the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) declared that a fishery resource disaster continued in 1995 for the salmon fisheries of the Pacific States of California (north of San Francisco), Oregon, and Washington, excluding Puget Sound. Under the authority of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA) of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 4107(d)), as amended, an additional \$12.7 million in Federal financial assistance was made available for affected salmon fishermen.

In the April 23, 1996, Federal Register notice (61 FR 17879), NMFS announced its decision to continue the basic structure of the Habitat Restoration Jobs Program and the Data Collection Jobs Program, as first established on October 11, 1994 (59 FR 51419), with subsequent amendments published on January 31, 1995 (60 FR 3908), and June 22, 1995 (60 FR 32507). NMFS decided to modify certain limitations, terms, and conditions of the NEAP programs to enable more fishermen to benefit from the assistance available from the jobs programs and to further reduce fishing capacity under the LBOP. The public was asked in the notice to comment on these new terms, limitations, and conditions prior to final implementation.

With respect to the 1996 LBOP, four options were presented for public comment, as follows:

Option 1—Eligible fishermen submit new bids or maintain the bids that they submitted to the 1995 LBOP. Starting with the lowest offers, licenses are accepted and retired by WDFW until available funding is exhausted.

Option 2—Starting with the lowest unsuccessful 1995 LBOP offer, WDFW would purchase licenses until available funding is exhausted.

Option 3—Unsuccessful bidders in the 1995 LBOP are offered set fixed prices for each license: Salmon troll and delivery—\$24,894, Salmon gill net—\$38,000, and Salmon charter—\$21,300. Remaining funds would be applied to new applications starting with the lowest offer.

Option 4—Applicants submit bids and uninsured loss estimates. Starting with the lowest ratio of bid to uninsured loss, WDFW would purchase licenses until available funding is exhausted.

In response to the April 23, 1996, notice of proposed program, NMFS received 27 comment letters from 10 fishing associations, 14 fishermen, 1 tribe, and 2 government entities. Most of

these comments concerned the LBOP. The comments specifically relating to the NEAP Habitat Restoration Program and the Data Collection Jobs Program were considered and addressed in the Federal Register notice published on August 1, 1996. However, as a result of significant intervening factors between the time of publication and proposed implementation, NMFS and the State of Washington decided to defer the final decision on the 1996 LBOP. These intervening factors included consultations with Washington State officials, and comments on the initial notice indicating a lack of public consensus on any proposed bidding option. The Governor of Washington, citing this lack of consensus, also supported a delay of the program for consideration of new options. These new bidding options were developed in response to these intervening factors and are presented in this notice for public comment before a final decision is made. The comments and NMFS response to the initial notice (61 FR 17879) are presented below for purposes of addressing issues that were raised by commenters concerning the 1995 program and maintaining participation by the public in the development of the new options.

Comments and Responses

Because many comments referred to the 1995 LBOP, it is helpful to know the outcome of this program. Under the 1995 LBOP, 459 of the 1378 possible licenses were submitted and 296 licenses were ultimately purchased. The maximum amount paid for a gill net license under this program was \$38,000; for a troll license, \$24,984; and for a charterboat license, \$21,300. The average compensation for the 83 gill net licenses purchased was \$21,998; for the 190 troll licenses purchased, \$9,136; and for the 23 charterboat licenses purchased, \$13,896. There are potentially 163 repeat participants and 919 new participants for the 1996 LBOP.

Comment 1: Several commenters wanted to give preference to fishermen who participated in the 1995 LBOP, because the commenters felt that these unsuccessful bidders took the first risk and demonstrated the sincerest intentions of giving up their licenses. The commenters also felt that fishermen who chose not to participate in the 1995 LBOP clearly understood that they would have no chance to receive any benefit from the program. Therefore, the commenters argued that these nonparticipants would be no worse off under Option 2. In contrast, other members of the public commented that preference should not be given to

unsuccessful bidders in the 1995 program because NMFS and WDFW never conditioned participation in any subsequent buy out program on participation in the initial program, and such an exclusion would unduly penalize a license holder who did not, for whatever reason, submit an offer under the 1995 program.

Response 1: Participation in the 1995 LBOP was voluntary and participating fishermen were given an opportunity to withdraw their offers and retain their licenses. Therefore, participation in the 1995 LBOP does not necessarily reflect "risk" or any greater "sincerity" to give up a license, particularly as many fishermen offered their licenses at the maximum price possible. NMFS agrees that neither the 1995 LBOP notice nor any other document ever stated that persons who did not participate in the 1995 LBOP would be excluded from future programs.

Comment 2: Many commenters addressed how the different bidding options would affect fishermen who suffered various levels of uninsured loss. Some stated that Option 1 favored those with low uninsured losses, while others believed that Option 4 favored the highly productive fishing operations that have the largest uninsured losses. Finally, compared with the other options, some said that Option 2 tended to give preference to those fishermen who had neither low nor high uninsured losses.

Response 2: The purpose of these options was not to target any specific sector of the industry, but to present methods by which the agency and WDFW proposed to achieve the NEAP objectives of providing financial assistance to commercial fishermen adversely impacted by the salmon fishery disaster, and to aid the long-term viability of the fishery resource. NMFS and the State of Washington, after review of the comments, will choose the option that most effectively achieves the NEAP objectives.

Comment 3: Several commenters stated that the 1995 LBOP forced fishermen to accept a fraction of their uninsured loss.

Response 3: NMFS stresses again that the LBOP is a voluntary program, not an entitlement program. Fishermen are asked to put a monetary value on their own licenses. Fishermen who do not feel the program provides enough compensation are not compelled to participate.

Comment 4: Several commenters commented that Option 2 was the most cost-effective option.

Response 4: Of the options presented, Option 2 does appear to have the least

administrative costs, since it relies on existing bids. However, the administrative costs associated with the new options, in relation to the benefits, do not differ significantly. While NMFS and the State of Washington must obviously consider the impact of administrative costs on the program, NMFS will choose the option that best meets the program's objectives.

Comment 5: Several commenters said that the proposed program was not like the NMFS Fishing Capacity Reduction Demonstration Program for Northeast groundfish vessels (FCRDP), while another commenter complained that the procedure proposed in Option 4 negates the competitive process and unnecessarily complicates the program.

Response 5: The reference in the proposed program notice to the FCRDP was to suggest that Option 4 adjusts bids via a vessel performance procedure in a way that is similar to the FCRDP bidding process. NMFS does not believe that the procedure complicates the program, because it relies on the same information that would have to be submitted for the other options. Furthermore, NMFS received no negative comments from the FCRDP participants that indicated any miscomprehension of the bidding system.

Comment 6: Several fishermen commented that the new bidders would have an advantage because information has been published on the 1995 individual bids and associated losses.

Response 6: The names of the unsuccessful troll fishermen have been released but not with their associated losses and bids. Such a release of the names is permissible under State law. Any information released on past bids and uninsured losses is historical information and would not give any new or previous bidder an advantage under a new competition. Previous bidders may change their bid strategies because of changes in their business environment, in response to revised bidding rules, or because of competition from new bidders.

Comment 7: One fisherman argued that Option 2 should be adopted, because the additional funds were meant to continue the same programs, which should, in effect, "pick up where they left off." Another commented that the notice of proposed program referred to a continued disaster. Therefore, they argued, it would be prejudicial to former, unsuccessful, applicants to deny them the opportunity to "continue" to accept or reject their original bids. On the other hand, another fisherman commented that the WDFW and NOAA documents show that the 1996 LBOP is

a separate and distinct program from the 1995 LBOP.

Response 7: The Secretary established the NEAP as an overarching financial assistance plan to assist the Pacific Northwest in coping with the fisheries disasters that occurred before and up until 1995. Under the plan, NMFS created the individual NEAP grant programs, such as the Habitat Restoration Jobs Program, the Data Collection Jobs Program, and the LBOP. These programs each have unique award terms, limitations, and conditions. The new funding provided for the programs described in the proposed notice does not obligate NMFS to continue the programs with the same program parameters; NMFS has the discretion to create new programs with the same or different terms, limitations, and conditions. Based on the comments and consultations with State of Washington officials, NMFS has determined that a new LBOP with new parameters should be considered.

Comment 8: Several commenters stated that fishermen should be allowed to sell more than one license.

Response 8: The initial proposed options and the options being proposed below do not restrict the number of licenses that may be sold by one applicant. However, NMFS is specifically requesting comment on this issue as part of the new options presented below in this notice.

Comment 9: One respondent requested that fleet reduction targets be determined and that reentry into the fishery be precluded until each fleet meets its reduction target.

Response 9: Funds were allocated between the industry sectors (see Response 15) consistent with recommendations from the NMFS Proposed Recovery Plan for Snake River Salmon, which calls for reduction of the Oregon and Washington troll fleet by 50 percent and elimination of all gill net fishing on the mainstem of the Columbia River. In addition, the new Option 2 proposed below includes restrictions on reentry into the fleet.

Comment 10: One commenter stated that a fisherman who sells a permit under the 1996 LBOP should be ineligible to purchase another permit.

Response 10: The new Option 2, which is described below, addresses this comment by prohibiting a person who sells a license in the 1996 program from purchasing a commercial license for 10 years, beginning January 1, 1997.

Comment 11: Many commenters voiced concerns about timing and communication with the industry. Some thought additional meetings between Federal and State officials and the

industry would be useful, while others supported a delay in the program to aid communication with the industry and to improve the design of the program.

Response 11: NMFS and the State of Washington are postponing final decisions on the 1996 LBOP in order to receive comments on the new options presented below. This delay should provide a greater opportunity for public participation through the established Federal and Washington State public comment processes.

Comment 12: Several commenters complained that not all affected parties had an equal opportunity to meet with State and Federal officials.

Response 12: The Administrative Procedure Act does not prohibit contact with the public during the informal rulemaking process as long as the content of the meetings, and any supplementary information provided at the meetings, are made part of the public record. NMFS recognizes the benefit of public participation in the decision making process, and therefore, representatives of NOAA, NMFS, and the Governor of Washington met with various sectors of the affected public during the option development stage and comment period. NMFS is willing to meet with anyone who is interested in discussing the program, time and resources permitting.

Comment 13: One commenter alleged that WDFW officials provided misinformation about the limits to bidders, causing some to "sell out" at too low a price and others not to bid. The commenter also suggested that the application package should state explicitly the importance of choosing a bid amount since high bids may make the application less competitive.

Response 13: NMFS has forwarded these comments to WDFW.

Comment 14: Some commenters opposed any potential application to the 1996 LBOP of the \$25,000/\$50,000 maximum income limitation used in the Habitat Restoration Jobs Program and Data Collection Jobs Program.

Response 14: The \$25,000/\$50,000 maximum income limitation was not proposed and is not being considered for this program.

Comment 15: One commenter suggested that because gill net vessels have fewer options compared to most troll and charter vessels, compensation for gill net licenses should be treated differently than for other commercial permits.

Response 15: The 1996 LBOP allocates \$2.3 million for the purchase of salmon troll and delivery licenses, \$2.3 million for the purchase of Columbia River gill net licenses, and

\$0.4 million for salmon charter licenses. These allocations reflect an appreciation for the different circumstances facing the major industry sectors. However, further specialization of the program to accommodate each industry sector would be too administratively burdensome and would undermine the goal of equitable and efficient distribution of the disaster funds.

Comment 16: One fisherman who moved his operation to Alaska because of the Boldt Decision requested that the income from Alaska be used to determine uninsured loss. He further requested inclusion of income from years before 1988.

Response 16: The Secretary's disaster declaration limits assistance to the salmon fisheries of California, Oregon, and Washington, excluding Puget Sound, and NMFS has defined the disaster period as extending only to the years 1991 through 1995.

Comment 17: One tribal organization made three related comments. First, buy out programs for non-tribal fishermen should be continued. Second, each tribe should receive its own allocation of NEAP funds. Third, NEAP should include programs that help tribes develop new non-salmon fisheries.

Response 17: As currently structured, the proposed 1996 LBOP allows participation by both tribal and non-tribal fishermen. Available funding is insufficient to provide individual allocations and programs for each particular user group.

Proposed Revisions to the 1996 LBOP

Based on above comments and discussions with Washington State officials concerning the four initial options proposed, NMFS and the State of Washington agreed to work together in developing new options. These options share similar characteristics with Options 1 and 4 presented in the proposed notice of April 23, 1996, but with certain important differences. One difference is that the calculation of uninsured loss is no longer necessary under the amended IFA. However, NMFS will retain the concept and require fishermen to calculate their "salmon disaster impact" (SDI), which is a value analogous to the calculation of uninsured loss under the initial buy out program. A fisherman's SDI is equal to 2.5 times the difference between the highest gross salmon fishery income derived from fishing during any calendar year 1986 through 1991 (base year), less the sum of the least amount of salmon fishery income derived from commercial salmon fishing during any calendar year from 1991 through 1995 (comparison year). Fishermen can use

the same information they supplied to the 1995 LBOP to determine their SDI. The use of SDI in place of an uninsured loss determination puts similar restrictions on new participants as were placed on the original participants. Therefore, no large penalty or reward accrues to those who participated in the initial program.

The options in this notice also differ from those published on April 23, 1996, in that bids would also be constrained by an absolute maximum offer limit. Under Option 1, fishermen may offer their licenses for any amount up to \$40,000 or their SDI, whichever is less. Similarly, under Option 2, fishermen may offer their licenses for any amount up to \$50,000 or their SDI, whichever is less. The higher maximum offer limit under Option 2 (\$50,000) reflects the additional requirement that successful participants cannot purchase or operate another commercial salmon license for 10 years beginning January 1, 1997, unless the license was owned or operated by that person in 1995. If the individual owned a license in 1995, this is indicative of the fact that the person owned multiple licenses and did not purchase a new license in 1996 in order to speculate on any future government buy out program. Therefore, any license owned in 1995 and retained after participation in the 1996 LBOP is excluded from the ten-year prohibition.

These maximum offer limits are designed to increase the number of potential successful bidders and ensure awards consistent with amounts paid under the initial program. These limits are reasonable given the limited funds available, the amounts paid for licenses under the initial program, and the number of fishermen affected by the disaster and still eligible for the program. Comments are specifically requested on these maximum offer amounts.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible under either option, the person making the offer must fulfill the following requirements:

1. The person making the offer must have possessed or was eligible to possess one of the following Washington State salmon fishery licenses in 1994 and possessed the same license in 1995:
 - a. Salmon troll license;
 - b. Salmon delivery license;
 - c. Salmon gill net—Grays Harbor-Columbia River;
 - d. Salmon gill net—Willapa Bay-Columbia River; or
 - e. Salmon charter.
2. A participant must demonstrate an SDI greater than \$0.

3. Applicants must not have earned more than \$2,000,000 in net revenues annually from commercial fishing for the period between 1991 and 1994.

Options

Option 1—License holders may offer their licenses for any amount up to \$40,000 or their SDI, whichever is less. Licenses will be purchased starting with the lowest bid. In the event of a tie, preference will be given to the fisherman with the highest SDI.

Option 2—License holders may offer their licenses for any amount up to \$50,000 or their SDI, whichever is less. Bids will be ranked according to the offer ratio. The offer ratio is the division of the offer amount by the SDI. Licenses will be ranked and purchased starting with those bids that have the lowest offer ratios. In the event of a tie, where offer ratios are identical, the lowest offer will be given preference. Successful participants cannot purchase or operate another commercial salmon license for 10 years beginning January 1, 1997, unless the license was owned or operated by that person in 1995.

Option 1 Example

Step 1: Determine SDI

Step 1A: Base Year Selection:

Select the highest year of gross income during the base period 1986 through 1991. For Fisherman A, this is \$38,000. For Fisherman B, this is \$8,000.

Step 1B: Comparison Year Selection:

Select the lowest year of gross income during the comparison year of 1991 through 1995. For Fisherman A, this is \$3,000. For Fisherman B, this is \$0.

Step 1C: Subtraction

Subtract the selected comparison year gross income from the selected base year income. For Fisherman A, this is \$38,000 minus \$3,000, or \$35,000. For Fisherman B, this is \$8,000 minus \$0, or \$8,000.

Step 1D: Multiplication

Multiply the difference between the comparison year and base year gross income by 2.5. For Fisherman A, this is \$35,000 multiplied by 2.5, or \$87,500. For Fisherman B, this is \$8,000 multiplied by 2.5, or \$20,000.

Step 1E: SDI Determination

SDI is the result of steps 1A through 1D. Fisherman A's SDI is \$87,500 $((\$38,000 - \$3,000) \times 2.5 = \$87,500)$. Fisherman B's SDI is \$20,000 $((\$8,000 - \$0) \times 2.5 = \$20,000)$.

Step 2: Determine Maximum Offer Amount

The maximum offer amount under Option 1 is \$40,000 or the fisherman's SDI, whichever is less. Fisherman A's SDI is \$87,500, which is greater than \$40,000. Therefore, Fisherman A's maximum bid is \$40,000 because \$40,000 is the maximum any fisherman can receive under this option. Fisherman B's maximum bid is \$20,000 because his SDI is less than \$40,000.

Step 3: Determine Bid

Fishermen can choose to submit an offer that ranges from \$1 up to their maximum offer limit. Fisherman A's range is from \$1 to \$40,000. Fisherman B's range is from \$1 to \$20,000.

Ranking of Bids under Option 1

If both Fisherman A and Fisherman B submit their respective maximum offers, Fisherman B's offer would be accepted first because it is less than Fisherman A's offer. If Fisherman A elected to submit an offer of \$19,000 and Fisherman B elected to submit a maximum offer of \$20,000, then Fisherman A's offer would be accepted first because it is less than Fisherman B's offer. In the event of a tie between fishermen, preference will be given to the fishermen with the highest SDI. Therefore, if both Fisherman A and Fisherman B submit offers of \$19,000, then Fisherman A would be given preference because Fisherman A's SDI is higher than Fisherman B's.

Option 2 Example

Step 1: Determine SDI (Same as Steps 1 through 1E in Option 1 Example)

Step 2: Determine Maximum Offer Amount

The maximum offer amount under this option is \$50,000 or the fisherman's SDI, whichever is less. Fisherman A's SDI is \$87,500, which is greater than \$50,000. Therefore, Fisherman A's maximum bid is \$50,000 because \$50,000 is the maximum any fisherman can receive under this option. Fisherman B's maximum bid is \$20,000 because his SDI is less than \$50,000.

Step 3: Determine Offer

Fishermen can choose to submit an offer that ranges from \$1 up to their maximum offer limit. Fisherman A's range is from \$1 to \$50,000. Fisherman B's range is from \$1 to \$20,000.

Step 4: Determine Offer Ratio

Divide the amount offered by the fisherman's SDI. If Fisherman A chose to offer the maximum of \$50,000, then Fisherman A's ratio would be \$50,000

divided by \$87,500, which is equal to 0.57. If Fisherman B chose to offer his SDI (\$20,000), then Fisherman B's offer ratio would be $\$20,000/\$20,000 = 1.0$.

Ranking of Bids under Option 2

If both Fisherman A and Fisherman B elected to submit their respective maximum offers, Fisherman A's offer would be the first accepted because the 0.57 offer ratio is less than 1.0. If Fisherman B elected to submit an offer of \$11,000, then Fisherman B's offer ratio would be 0.55 ($\$11,000/\$20,000$). Because Fisherman B's offer ratio is lower than Fisherman A's offer ratio, Fisherman B's offer would be accepted first. In the event of a tie with identical offer ratios, preference will be given to the fishermen with the lowest offer amount.

Additional Terms, Limitations, and Conditions

A license holder may offer more than one license, but income used in the calculation of an offer that is accepted may not be used in the calculation of any other offer. Licenses will be purchased in order of ranking until funds are exhausted. The State of Washington, in consultation with NMFS, will reserve the right to reject any and all offers if it is determined by NMFS that such action is in the best interests of the program or if revisions to the program are warranted in the future.

Proprietary information submitted by applicants will only be disclosed to State and Federal officials who are responsible for the License Buy Out Program, or otherwise when required by court order or other applicable law. This information is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance

The Program is listed in the "Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance" under No. 11.452, Unallied Industry Projects.

Classification

This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

The Assistant General Counsel for Legislation and Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration that this notice would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because only a small portion of West Coast salmon fishermen will be directly affected. NMFS estimates that only

approximately 3.6 percent of the industry will receive financial assistance through the LBOP. Therefore, the impacts of the notice are not significant within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. They are not likely to lead to a reduction in the annual gross revenues by more than 5 percent or an increase in total costs of production by more than 5 percent, nor would this action result in any greater compliance costs.

This program involves a collection-of-information requirement subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The collection of this information has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), under OMB control number 0648-0288. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Authority: Public Law 99-659 (16 U.S.C. 4107 *et seq.*); Public Law 102-396.

Dated: August 22, 1996.

C. Karnella,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-21999 Filed 8-28-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

Public Information Collection Requirement Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review

ACTION: Notice.

The Department of Defense has submitted to OMB for clearance, the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Title, Applicable Form, and OMB Control Number: CHAMPUS Claim Form—Patient's Request for Medical Payment; DD Form 2642, OMB Number 0720-0006.

Type of Request: Reinstatement, with change.

Number of Respondents: 1,500,000.

Responses Per Respondent: 1.

Annual Responses: 1,500,000.

Average Burden Per Response: 15 minutes.

Annual Burden Hours: 375,000 hours.

Needs and Uses: Respondents to this information collection are beneficiaries

claiming reimbursement for medical expenses under the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Uniformed Services (TRICARE/CHAMPUS). DD Form 2642, CHAMPUS Claim—Patient's Request for Medical Payment, is used by TRICARE/CHAMPUS beneficiaries to file for reimbursement of costs paid to providers and suppliers for authorized health care services or supplies. The information collected will be used to determine beneficiary eligibility, other health insurance liability, and certification that the beneficiary received the care.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Frequency: On occasion.

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

OMB Desk Officer: Ms. Allison Eydt.

Written comments and recommendations on the proposed information collection should be sent to Ms. Eydt at the Office of Management and Budget, Desk Officer for DOD, Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

DOD Clearance Officer: Mr. William Pearce.

Written request for copies of the information collection proposal should be sent to Mr. Pearce, WHS/DIOR, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302.

Dated August 23, 1996.

Patricia L. Toppings,

Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.

[FR Doc. 96-21997 Filed 8-28-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5000-04-M

Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS); Specialized Treatment Service (STS) Program

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, DoD.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice is to advise interested parties that Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), and National Naval Medical Center (NNMC), have been designated as the components of a Multi-Regional Specialized Treatment Services (STS) Facility for Cardiac Surgery for TRICARE Regions 1 and 2. This designation covers the following Diagnosis Related Groups:

- 104—Cardiac valve procedure with cardiac cath
- 105—Cardiac valve procedure without cardiac cath
- 106—Coronary bypass with cardiac cath
- 107—Coronary bypass without cardiac cath
- 108—Other cardiothoracic procedures