

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[Docket No. 010412091-1091-01; I.D. 040501D]

RIN 0648-ZB05

Financial Assistance for Research and Development Projects in Chesapeake Bay to Strengthen, Develop and/or Improve the Stock Conditions of the Chesapeake Bay Fisheries

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

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds.

SUMMARY: A total of up to \$1,315,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 funds is available through the NOAA/NMFS Chesapeake Bay Office to assist institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, foreign governments, organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments, international organizations, state, local and Indian tribal governments in carrying out research and development projects that address various aspects of Chesapeake Bay fisheries (commercial and recreational), including coastal and estuarine research, monitoring, and assessment; fisheries research and stock assessments; data management; and, multiple species interactions through cooperative agreements. About \$425,000 of the base amount is available to initiate new projects in FY 2001, as described in this announcement. It is the intent of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office to continue with several existing relationships and to make awards through this program for projects pending acceptable scientific review. These projects include multispecies monitoring program designs, and hard clam and oyster stock assessments. NMFS issues this document to set forth how to apply for financial assistance and how NMFS will determine which applications will be selected for funding.

DATES: Applications for funding under this program must be received by 5 p.m. eastern daylight savings time on June 14, 2001. Applications received after that time will not be considered for funding. No applications will be accepted by facsimile machine submission.

ADDRESSES: Send completed applications to: Derek Orner, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, 410 Severn

Avenue, Suite 107A, Annapolis, MD 21403.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Derek Orner, 410/267-5660; or e-mail: derek.ornier@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Introduction

A. Authority. The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended, at 16 U.S.C. 753 (a), authorizes the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), for the purpose of developing adequate, coordinated, cooperative research and training programs for fish and wildlife resources, to continue to enter into cooperative agreements with colleges and universities, with game and fish departments of the several states, and with non-profit organizations relating to cooperative research units. The Departments of Commerce (DOC), Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2001 makes funds available to the Secretary.

B. Catalog of Federal Assistance (CFDA). The research to be funded is in support of the Chesapeake Bay Studies (CFDA 11.457), under the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee (CBSAC).

C. Program Description. CBSAC was established in 1985 to plan and review Baywide resource assessments, coordinate relevant actions of state and federal agencies, report on fisheries status and trends, and determine, fund and review research projects. The program implements a Baywide plan for the assessment of commercially, recreationally, and selected ecologically important species in the Chesapeake Bay. In 1988, CBSAC developed a Baywide Stock Assessment Plan, in response to provisions in the Chesapeake Bay Agreement of 1987. The Plan identified that key obstacles to assessing Bay stocks was the lack of consistent, Baywide, fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data. Research projects funded since 1988 have focused on developing and improving fishery-independent surveys and catch statistics for key Bay species, such as striped bass, oysters, blue crabs and alosids. Stock assessment research is essential, given the recent declines in harvest and apparent stock condition for many of the important species of the Chesapeake Bay.

D. Funding Availability. This document describes how interested persons can apply for funding under the Chesapeake Bay Studies Program, and how funding decisions will be made.

Funding for projects depends on an allocation of funds by Congress for the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office in Fiscal

Year (FY) 2001. This solicitation announces that funding of up to \$1,375,000 may be available through the Chesapeake Bay Studies Program. This announcement does not guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all selected applications submitted under this program.

II. Funding Priorities

A. In developing a research proposal, applicants should address one or more of the following funding priorities:

(1) *Stock Assessment Research*—Consideration for funding will be given to applications that address the following stock assessment research and management priorities for the Chesapeake Bay. These priorities are not listed in any particular order:

(a) Assessments of the abundance, productivity, distribution, and exploitation patterns of important Chesapeake Bay finfish and shellfish resources. Proposals may include research on life history characteristics, stock-recruitment relationships, and schedules of vital rates. Descriptions of stock structure, demographics and spatial distribution would also be appropriate. It is anticipated that proposals will combine analyses of existing fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data. Proposals focusing on soft clams are particularly encouraged.

(b) *Blue Crab Recreational Survey*—Projects should:

- i. Review the work previously conducted on the development of methods for conducting a Baywide recreational survey;
- ii. Implement on a Baywide scale based on earlier work;
- iii. Provide reliable estimates of recreational catch, fishing effort, catch rates, size composition, and sex ratios for all components of the blue crab recreational fisheries.

(c) *Blue Crab Stock Assessment Analyses*—Projects should:

- i. Provide analyses which may corroborate the results of the length-based estimates of fishing mortality rates (current estimates based on 120 mm or greater carapace width) and investigations into the relative exploitation rates on peeler size blue crabs.
- ii. Provide analyses of the trends in relative exploitation rates on blue crab, according to major gear types used in the commercial fishery.
- iii. Develop methods for estimation of Baywide commercial fishing effort and conduct a pilot study to test the methods.
- iv. Design and develop an integrated Baywide blue crab mark and recapture

study that will provide information on growth, natural mortality, fishing mortality, size selectivity, catchability, reporting rates and the distribution of harvest among the fisheries. Results should be informative with respect to the reproductive frequency of female crabs, and longevity. Recognizing the scope of this project, subcomponents that will help in contributing to the development of a Baywide framework for this project will be accepted. Projects proposing tagging of adult female crabs utilizing external tags, and projects proposing tagging of both male and female crabs including the development and use of internally anchored tags which persist through the molting process are both encouraged.

(d) Design of a method/survey to estimate the Baywide abundance of oysters in Chesapeake Bay. The purpose of this survey will be to track progress towards achieving the Chesapeake Bay Program goal of increasing the oyster population ten-fold by the year 2010. The investigators should take into consideration existing state surveys and other work that already fulfill various data needs.

(e) Improvement or implementation of the collection of fishery-dependent data within Chesapeake Bay. Projects can involve either the commercial and/or recreational components of the fishery. Projects should focus on collecting biological data (size, sex, age, diet), and catch and effort data from Baywide harvests of significant finfish and shellfish fisheries to provide accurate, statistically representative information on the spatial and temporal characteristics of the harvest. Proposals may involve designs for port-sampling of landings, or on-board analysis of the catch, analysis of intercepts and telephone surveys. Proposals that document information on by-catch would be relevant.

The proposals should recognize current efforts to collect biological data from Bay fisheries and attempt to define the optimal, regional (Maryland, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and Virginia jurisdictions) sampling program. Proposals focusing on the blue crab commercial fishery are particularly encouraged.

(2) *Multispecies Management or Research*—The Chesapeake Bay is a complex and dynamic ecosystem that supports many fisheries that are economically important both regionally and nationally. To date, these resources have been managed on a single species basis. While the single species approach has served us well, the existence of both biological and technical (by-catch) interactions in most Chesapeake Bay

fisheries points to the need to move toward a wider, multispecies perspective. This viewpoint was wholeheartedly endorsed at a workshop of regional, national and international scientists held to address the potential utility of multispecies approaches to fisheries management in the Chesapeake Bay (STAC Publication 98-002, www.chesapeake.org). The ultimate objective of this research and monitoring is to lead to the development of an ecosystem plan for Chesapeake Bay fisheries, within which the rational exploitation of individual species can be determined.

Consideration for funding will be given to applications that address the following multispecies management and research priorities for the Chesapeake Bay. It should be realized that certain priorities may require a larger funding commitment, although the priorities are not listed in any implied order:

(a) *Fishery-independent Surveys.* Plan, develop and initiate coordinated Baywide surveys to regularly estimate species abundances, trends and biological characteristics (e.g., age/size structure, recruitments, growth and mortality rates, food habitats) for economically and ecologically important key species. Proposals within this task may:

i. Review and assess existing fishery independent sampling programs conducted by regional agencies to evaluate their potential applicability to the Chesapeake Bay. This may include evaluation of the use of fixed and random sampling protocols, with or without stratification, and the sampling characteristics of different gear types.

ii. Develop and initiate a Baywide, coordinated, fishery-independent survey that may include multiple gear, such as benthic and midwater trawling, and hydroacoustics to characterize the status and trends in the abundance, distribution and characteristics of key Chesapeake Bay finfish and shellfish.

(b) *Retrospective Analyses.* Document and quantify multispecies interactions among economically and ecologically important finfish and shellfish within the Chesapeake Bay. The proposed work should lead to the identification of the 'strong' interactions within the Chesapeake Bay fisheries system. Work may involve analysis of commercial and recreational catch and effort data, the analysis of the patterns of diets and energy flows within the fisheries system, or multivariate analyses of abundance relationships within the fisheries system and their relationship to environmental and habitat characteristics.

(c) *Multispecies Assessment / Ecosystem Modeling.* Apply and assess alternative multispecies fisheries models to the Chesapeake Bay fisheries systems. The submitted proposal should detail the development of a multispecies or ecosystem model focusing on core Chesapeake Bay species. Examples of possible approaches include, but are not limited to: multispecies biomass dynamic, multispecies yield per recruit, Multi species virtual population analysis, multispecies bioenergetics, spatial-physical predator-prey, trophic production and ecosystem simulation models. Model approaches should seek to predict constraints and patterns in the fisheries production of the Chesapeake Bay system.

III. How To Apply

A. Eligible applicants. Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, foreign governments, organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments, international organizations, state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this notice.

B. Duration and Terms of Funding. Under this solicitation, NMFS will fund Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Research Projects as 12-month cooperative agreements. The cooperative agreement has been determined to be the appropriate funding instrument because of the substantial involvement of NMFS in:

1. Developing program research priorities;
2. Evaluating the performance of the program for effectiveness in meeting regional goals for Chesapeake Bay stock assessments;
3. Monitoring the progress of each funded project;
4. Holding periodic workshops with investigators; and
5. Working with recipients to prepare annual reports summarizing current accomplishments of the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee.

Project dates should be scheduled to begin no later than 1 October 2001. Cooperative agreements are approved on an annual basis but may be considered eligible for continuation beyond the first project and budget period subject to the approved scope of work, satisfactory progress, and availability of funds at the total discretion of NMFS. However, there are no assurances for such continuation. Publication of this notice does not obligate NMFS to award any specific cooperative agreement or to

obligate any part of the entire amount of funds available.

C. Cost-sharing Requirements.

Applications must reflect the total budget necessary to accomplish the project, including contributions and/or donations.

D. Format. 1. Applications for project funding must be complete and must follow the format described. Applicants must identify the specific research priority or priorities to which they are responding. For applications containing more than one project, each project component must be identified individually using the format specified in this section. If an application is not in response to a priority, it should so state. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NMFS as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

Applications must not be bound and must be one-sided. All incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. Applicants are required to submit 1 signed original and 2 copies of the proposal.

2. Applications must be submitted in the following format:

(a) *Cover sheet:* An applicant must use Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Form 424 (revised 4/92) as the cover sheet for each project. Applicants may obtain copies of these forms from the NOAA Grants Management Division, the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (see **ADDRESSES**) or from the NOAA Grants website, <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/grants>.

(b) *Project summary:* Each proposal must contain a summary of not more than one page that provides the following:

- (1) Project title.
- (2) Project status (new).
- (3) Project duration (beginning and ending dates).
- (4) Name, address, and telephone number of applicant.
- (5) Principal Investigator(s) (PI).
- (6) Project objectives.
- (7) Summary of work to be performed.
- (8) Total Federal funds requested.
- (9) Cost-sharing to be provided from non-Federal sources, if any. Specify whether contributions are project-related cash or in-kind.
- (10) Total project cost.

(c) *Project description—(including results from prior support):* Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the proposal should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and should include: objectives for the period of the proposed work and the expected significance; relation to longer-term

goals of the PI's project; and relation to other work planned, anticipated, or underway under Federal Assistance. The project description must not exceed 15 pages in length. Visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are not included in the 15-page limitation. If an application is awarded, NMFS will make all portions of the project description available to the public for review; therefore, NMFS cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information submitted as part of any project, nor will NMFS accept for consideration any project requesting confidentiality of any part of the project.

Each project must be described as follows:

(1) *Identification of problem(s):* Describe the specific problem to be addressed (see section II).

(2) *Project objectives:* The project description must identify the following three project objectives: 1. Identify the specific priority listed earlier in the solicitation to which the proposed projects respond, if any; 2. Identify the problem/opportunity you intend to address and describe its significance to the fishing community; and 3. State what you expect the project to accomplish.

If you are applying to continue a project previously funded under the Chesapeake Bay Studies Program, describe in detail your progress to date and explain why you need additional funding.

Objectives should be:

- (a) Simple and easily understandable.
- (b) As specific and quantitative as possible.
- (c) Clear with respect to the "what and when" and should avoid the "how and why."
- (d) Attainable within the time, money, and human resources available.
- (e) Use action verbs that are accomplishment oriented.

(3) *Results from Prior Chesapeake Bay Studies Support:* If any PI or co-PI identified on the project has received Chesapeake Bay Studies (CBSAC) support in the past 5 years, information on the prior award(s) is required. The following information must be provided:

- (a) The NOAA award number, amount and period of support;
- (b) The title of the project;
- (c) Summary of the results of the completed work, including, for a research project, any contribution to the development of human resources in science/biology;
- (d) Publications resulting from the award;
- (e) Brief description of available data, samples, physical collections and other

related research products not described elsewhere; and

(f) If the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

(4) *Need for Government Financial Assistance:* Demonstrate the need for assistance. Any appropriate database to substantiate or reinforce the need for the project should be included. Explain why other funding sources cannot fund all the proposed work. List all other sources of funding that are or have been sought for the project.

(5) *Benefits or Results Expected:* Identify and document the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities.

(6) *Project Statement of Work:* The Statement of Work is the scientific or technical action plan of activities that are to be accomplished during each budget period of the project. This description must include the specific methodologies, by project job activity, proposed for accomplishing the proposal's objective(s).

Investigators submitting proposals in response to this announcement are strongly encouraged to develop inter-institutional, inter-disciplinary research teams in the form of single, integrated proposals or as individual proposals that are clearly linked together. Such collaborative efforts will be factored into the final funding decision.

Proposals should exhibit familiarity with related work that is completed or ongoing. Where appropriate, proposals should be multi-disciplinary. Coordinated efforts involving multiple eligible applicants or persons are encouraged.

Each Statement of Work must include the following information:

- (a) The applicant's name.
- (b) The inclusive dates of the budget period covered under the Statement of Work.
- (c) The title of the proposal.
- (d) The scientific or technical objectives and procedures that are to be accomplished during the budget period. A detailed set of objectives and procedures to answer who, what, how, when, and where. The procedures must be of sufficient detail to enable competent workers to be able to follow them and to complete scheduled activities.
- (e) Location of the work.
- (f) A list of all project personnel and their responsibilities.
- (g) A milestone table that summarizes the procedures (from item III.D.2.c(5)(d)) that are to be attained in each project month covered by the Statement of Work. Table format should follow

sequential month rather than calendar month (i.e. Project period Month 1, Month 2... versus October, November ...)

(7) *Federal, State and Local Government Activities*: List any programs (Federal, state, or local government or activities, including Sea Grant, state Coastal Zone Management Programs, NOAA Oyster Disease Research Program, the state/Federal Chesapeake Bay Program, etc.) this project would affect and describe the relationship between the project and those plans or activities.

(8) *Project Management*: Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Include resumes of principal investigators. List all persons directly employed by the applicant who will be involved with the project. If a consultant and/or subcontractor is selected prior to application submission, include the name and qualifications of the consultant and/or subcontractor and the process used for selection.

(9) *Monitoring of Project Performance*: Identify who will participate in monitoring the project.

(10) *Project Impacts*: Describe how these products or services will be made available to the fisheries and management communities.

(11) *Evaluation of Project*: The applicant is required to provide an evaluation of project accomplishments at the end of each budget period and in the final report. The application must describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to determine technical feasibility, or to quantify the results of the project in promoting increased production, product quality and safety, management effectiveness, or other measurable factors.

(12) *Total Project Costs*: Total project costs is the amount of funds required to accomplish what is proposed in the Statement of Work, and includes contributions and donations. All costs must be shown in a detailed budget. A standard budget form (SF-424A) is available from the offices listed and on the internet (see **ADDRESSES**). NMFS will not consider fees or profits as allowable costs for grantees. Additional cost detail may be required prior to a final analysis of overall cost allowability, allocability, and reasonableness. The date, period covered, and findings for the most recent financial audit performed, as well as the name of the audit firm, the contact person, and phone number and address, must be also provided.

d. *Supporting Documentation*: Applicants should provide any additional documents necessary to establish the assertions made in their proposals and to assist the reviewers in

understanding how the project would address the identified problem or issue. The total volume of such additional documentation must not exceed 20 pages.

IV. Review Process and Criteria

A. *Initial Evaluation of Applications*. Applications will be reviewed by NOAA to assure that they meet all requirements of this announcement, including eligibility and relevance to the Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Research Program. Proposals that do not support the technical and management priorities of the Chesapeake Bay, as defined in section II.A., will not be considered for funding.

B. *Consultation with Experts in the Field of Stock Assessment Research*. For applications meeting the requirements of this solicitation, NMFS will conduct a technical evaluation (via mail) of each project. This review normally will involve experts from both NOAA and non-NOAA organizations. All comments submitted to NMFS will be taken into consideration in the technical evaluation of projects. Reviewers will be asked to score and comment based on the following four criteria (total of 100 possible points):

1. Problem description and conceptual approach for resolution, especially the applicant's comprehension of the problem(s), familiarity with related work that is completed or ongoing, and proposed method of resolving the problem(s) (30 points).

2. Soundness of project design/technical approach, especially whether the applicant provided sufficient information to technically evaluate the project (35 points).

3. Project management and experience and qualifications of personnel (15 points).

4. Justification and allocation of the proposed budget (20 points).

C. *Review Panel*. NMFS will convene a review panel consisting of at least three regionally recognized experts in the scientific and management aspects of stock assessment research.

Each individual panel member will:

1. Provide independent review based on the same criteria and scoring as the technical review.

2. Provide a numerical score and suggestions for modifications (i.e., budget, personnel, technical approach, etc.).

The review panel will collectively:

1. Discuss all review comments, incorporating the evaluation provided by the technical reviewers.

2. Numerically rank the submitted applications in recommended funding order.

D. *Funding Decision*. After applications have been evaluated and ranked numerically for funding by the review panel, the Chief of the NOAA/NMFS Chesapeake Bay Office, in consultation with the Assistant Administrator (AA) for Fisheries, NOAA, will determine which project or projects will be recommended for funding based upon the technical evaluations and panel review comments, and determine the amount of funds available for the program. The review panel's numerical ranking will be the primary consideration for deciding which of the proposals will be selected for funding. In making the final selections, NOAA/NMFS may consider costs, geographical distribution, inter-jurisdictional and inter-institutional collaboration and duplication with other federally funded projects. Accordingly, numerical ranking is not the sole factor in deciding which proposals will be selected for funding. The Chief of the NOAA/NMFS Chesapeake Bay Office will prepare a written justification for any recommendations for funding that fall outside the ranking order, or for any cost adjustments. The exact amount of funds awarded to each project will be determined in preaward negotiations between the applicant, the Grants Office, and the NOAA/NMFS Chesapeake Bay Office staff. Potential grantees should not initiate projects in expectation of Federal funding until an award document signed by an authorized NOAA official has been received.

V. Administrative Requirements

A. *Obligations of the applicant*

1. *Periodic Workshops*—Investigators will be expected to attend one or two workshops with other Stock Assessment Research Program researchers to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration.

2. *Primary Applicant Certifications*—All primary applicants must submit a completed Form CD-511, "Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying," and the following explanations are hereby provided:

- a. *Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension*—Prospective participants (as defined at 15 CFR 26.105) are subject to 15 CFR part 26, "Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension," and the related section of the certification form prescribed earlier applies;

b. *Drug-free Workplace*—Grantees (as defined at 15 CFR part 26.605) are subject to 15 CFR part 26, subpart F, “Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants),” and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

c. *Anti-lobbying*—Persons (as defined at 15 CFR 28.105) are subject to the lobbying provisions of 31 U.S.C. 1352, “Limitation on use of appropriated funds to influence certain Federal contracting and financial transactions, and the lobbying section of the certification form prescribed above applies to applications/bids for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts for more than \$100,000, and loans and loan guarantees for more than \$150,000.

d. *Anti-lobbying Disclosure*—Any applicant who has paid or will pay for lobbying using any funds must submit an SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” as required under 15 CFR part 28, appendix B.

3. *Lower Tier Certifications*—Recipients shall require applicants/bidders for subgrants, contracts, subcontracts, or other lower tier covered transactions at any tier under the award to submit, if applicable, a completed Form CD-512, “Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying” and disclosure form SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.” Form CD-512 is intended for the use of recipients and should not be transmitted to DOC. SF-LLL submitted by any tier recipient or subrecipient should be submitted to DOC in accordance with the instructions contained in the award document.

B. *Other requirements. 1. Federal Policies and Procedures*—Recipients and subrecipients are subject to all Federal laws and Federal and DOC policies, regulations, and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

The Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities in its educational and research programs. The DOC/NOAA vision, mission, and goals are to achieve full participation by Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) in order to advance the development of human potential, to strengthen the nation’s capacity to provide high-quality education, and to increase opportunities for MSIs to participate in and benefit from Federal Financial Assistance programs. DOC/

NOAA encourages all applicants to include meaningful participation of MSIs.

2. *Indirect Cost Rates*—The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal Government. The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in the application under this program must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant Federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award. However, the Federal share of the indirect costs may not exceed 25 percent of the total proposed direct costs. Applicants with indirect costs above 25 percent may use the amount above the 25 percent level as cost sharing. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

3. *Past Performance*—Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. In addition, any recipient and/or researcher who is past due for submitting acceptable progress reports on any previous project funded under this program may be ineligible to be considered for new awards until the delinquent reports are received, reviewed and deemed acceptable by NMFS.

4. *Financial Management Certifications/preaward Accounting Survey*—Successful applicants, at the discretion of the NOAA Grants Officer, may be required to have their financial management systems certified by an independent public accountant as being in compliance with Federal standards specified in the applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars prior to execution of the award. Any first-time applicant for Federal grant funds may be subject to a preaward accounting survey by the DOC specified in the applicable OMB Circulars/Code of Federal Regulations prior to execution of the award.

5. *Delinquent Federal Debts*—No award of Federal funds shall be made to an applicant who has an outstanding delinquent Federal debt until either:

- (a) The delinquent account is paid in full;
- (b) A negotiated repayment schedule is established and at least one payment is received; or
- (c) Other arrangements satisfactory to DOC are made.

6. *Name Checks*—Potential recipients may be required to submit an “Identification-Application for Funding Assistance” (Form CD-346), which is

used to ascertain background information on key individuals associated with the potential recipient. All non-profit and for-profit applicants are subject to a name check review process. Name checks are intended to reveal if any key individuals associated with the applicant have been convicted of, or are presently facing, criminal charges such as fraud, theft, perjury, or other matters that significantly reflect on the applicant’s management honesty or financial integrity. Applicants will also be subject to credit check reviews.

7. *False Statements*—A false statement on the application is grounds for denial or termination of funds and grounds for possible punishment by a fine or imprisonment as provided in 18 U.S.C. 1001.

8. *Preaward Activities*—If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so solely at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the Government. Notwithstanding any verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of DOC to cover preaward costs.

9. *Purchase of American-made Equipment and Products*—Applicants are hereby notified that they will be encouraged, to the greatest extent practicable, to purchase American-made equipment and products with funding provided under this program in accordance with Congressional intent as set forth in the resolution contained in Pub. L. 103-317, sections 607(a) and (b).

10. *Other*—If an application is selected for funding, DOC has no obligation to provide any additional funding in connection with that award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of DOC.

Cooperative agreements awarded pursuant to pertinent statutes shall be in accordance with the Fisheries Research Plan (comprehensive program of fisheries research) in effect on the date of the award.

Classification

This action has been determined to be “not significant” for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2), prior notice and opportunity for public comment are not required under the Administrative Procedure Act for this notice concerning grants, benefits, and contracts. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis is not required for purposes of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

This notice contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the

Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, and SF–LLL have been approved by OMB under their respective control numbers 0348–0043, 0348–0044, and 0348–0046. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to nor shall any 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.

Dated: May 9, 2001.

William T. Hogarth,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
[FR Doc. 01–12219 Filed 5–14–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 050701D]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Skate Oversight Committee in May, 2001. Recommendations from the committee will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will held on Wednesday, May 30, 2001, at 9:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 739–7000.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Newburyport, MA 01950; telephone: (978) 465–0492.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; (978) 465–0492. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council (see **ADDRESSES**).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The committee will review the Skate Plan Development Team Report. The agenda will include finalization of draft Skate Fishery Management Plan alternatives for public hearings for Council approval at the June 13–14, 2001 Council meeting;

alternatives may include specifications for a skate permit and catch reporting system, prohibitions on the possession of certain skate species, management measures for the bait and/or wing fishery, possession limits, modification of regulations pertaining to the current southern New England skate exemption areas, gear restrictions, and/or any other appropriate measures. The committee will also discuss a control date for skate fishing.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: May 10, 2001.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 01–12216 Filed 5–14–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS

Request for Public Comment on Short Supply Request Under the United States–Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA)

May 11, 2001.

AGENCY: Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

ACTION: Request for public comments concerning a request for a determination that microfilament fabric of continuous polyester and nylon filaments with average size of 0.02 to 0.8 decitex cannot be supplied by the domestic industry in commercial quantities in a timely manner under the CBTPA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Janet Heinzen, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482–3400.

SUMMARY: On May 8, 2001 the Chairman of CITA received a petition on behalf of The Freudenberg Nonwovens Group alleging that microfilament fabric of continuous polyester and nylon filaments with average size of 0.02 to 0.8 decitex, classified in subheading 5603.11.0090, 5603.12.0090, 5603.13.0090 or 5603.14.9090 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS), cannot be supplied by the domestic industry in commercial quantities in a timely manner. It requests that the President proclaim that apparel articles of such fabrics be eligible for preferential treatment under the CBTPA. CITA hereby solicits public comments on this request, in particular with regard to whether microfilament fabric of continuous polyester and nylon filaments with average size of 0.02 to 0.8 decitex can be supplied by the domestic industry in commercial quantities in a timely manner. Comments must be submitted by May 30, 2001 to the Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements, Room 3001, United States Department of Commerce, 14th and Constitution, NW., Washington, DC 20230.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: Section 213(b)(2)(A)(v)(II) of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, as added by Section 211(a) of the CBTPA; Section 6 of Executive Order No. 13191 of January 17, 2001.

BACKGROUND: The CBTPA provides for quota- and duty-free treatment for qualifying textile and apparel products. Such treatment is generally limited to products manufactured from yarns or fabrics formed in the United States or a beneficiary country. The CBTPA also provides for quota- and duty-free treatment for apparel articles that are both cut (or knit-to-shape) and sewn or otherwise assembled in one or more CBTPA beneficiary countries from fabric or yarn that is not formed in the United States or a CBTPA beneficiary country, if it has been determined that such fabric or yarn cannot be supplied by the domestic industry in commercial quantities in a timely manner and the President has proclaimed such treatment. In Executive Order No. 13191, the President delegated to CITA the authority to determine whether yarns or fabrics cannot be supplied by the domestic industry in commercial quantities in a timely manner under the CBTPA and directed CITA to establish procedures to ensure appropriate public participation in any such determination. On March 6, 2001, CITA published procedures that it will follow in considering requests. (66 FR 13502).