

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announces its intent to hold a meeting to discuss measurement needs for fire testing laboratories. The meeting will be held at the NIST Gaithersburg campus, on January 20 and 21, 2004, and is open to all interested parties.

DATES: The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on January 20, 2004, and conclude at noon on January 21, 2004. Those wishing to attend must register by January 15, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in room B245 of the Polymers Building at the NIST Gaithersburg Campus, 100 Bureau Drive, Gaithersburg, MD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Those wishing to attend should contact Dr. William Grosshandler at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Mail Stop 8660, 100 Bureau Drive, Gaithersburg, MD, 20899-8660, or by e-mail at william.grosshandler@nist.gov or by telephone at (301) 975-2310.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Commerce involving a multitude of materials, construction products, consumer products and fire protection systems is regulated to ensure the fire safety of the public. Standard test methods have been developed over the past 100 years, many based upon research conducted at NIST, that enable these materials and products to be rated as acceptable (or not) for various applications, depending upon regulations enforced by the authority having jurisdiction. By in large, these test methods are prescriptive in nature. The ratings or classifications obtained from these tests provide a relative measure of the one product versus another, but often there is little relation between a rating or classification and the performance of the product or material in an actual fire situation. The distinction between one rating or classification and the next may not be justified by the variability in the behavior of the material or product and the ability to conduct the test in a precise manner. Fire testing is hampered by the complexity of the physical, thermal and chemical processes involved, the variability of the environment under which the product is expected to perform, the fact that fire performance is often an afterthought in the design process, and the high stakes (*i.e.*, potential for loss of life and property) associated with being wrong in the rating. The concern for public safety is countered by a concern not to unreasonably hamper market forces or to put up trade barriers. The following

questions arising from the complexity of the fire testing arena, originally brought up at a NIST workshop on fire test measurements in June, 2001, are in need of further discussion:

- How can we promote best practices for fire testing?
 - What are the major sources of measurement uncertainty in standard fire tests?
 - How can new fire measurement technologies be transitioned into practice, operators be trained, and round-robin testing be better coordinated?
 - Is there a need for a clearing house for information on international harmonization and performance-based codes that impact fire testing?
 - Can the interests of North American fire testing laboratories be best preserved through scientific understanding and best practices?
 - How can two-way communications between fire testing laboratories and code officials, manufacturers of regulated materials and products, and consumer interest groups be improved?
- The meeting will be held at the NIST Gaithersburg campus, on January 20 and 21, 2004, and is open to all interested parties.

Dated: December 22, 2003.

Hratch G. Semerjian,
Acting Deputy Director.

[FR Doc. 04-36 Filed 1-2-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Institute of Standards and Technology

The 89th Interim Meeting of the National Conference on Weights and Measures

AGENCY: National Institute of Standards and Technology, Commerce.

ACTION: Announcement of public meeting of the National Conference on Weights and Measures.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the interim meeting of the National Conference on Weights and Measures will be held January 25 through January 28, 2004, at the Hyatt Regency Bethesda, Bethesda, Maryland. This meeting is open to the public. The National Conference on Weights and Measures is an organization of weights and measures enforcement officials of the States, counties, and cities of the United States, and private sector representatives. The interim meeting of the Conference brings together enforcement officials, other government officials, and

representatives of business, industry, trade associations, and consumer organizations to discuss subjects that related to the field of weights and measures technology and administration. Pursuant to (15 U.S.C. 272(b)(6)), the National Institute of Standards and Technology supports the National Conference on Weights and Measures in order to promote uniformity among the States in the complexity of laws, regulations, methods, and testing equipment that comprises regulatory control by the States of commercial weighing and measuring.

DATES: January 25-28, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Hyatt Regency Bethesda, Bethesda, Maryland.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Henry V. Oppermann, Chief, NIST, Weights and Measures Division, 100 Bureau Drive, Stop 2600, Gaithersburg, MD 20899-2600. Telephone (301) 975-4004, or e-mail: owm@nist.gov.

Dated: December 23, 2003.

Hratch G. Semerjian,
Acting Deputy Director.

[FR Doc. 04-10 Filed 1-2-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 122903C]

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Standardized Application and Performance Report Formats for NMFS Noncompetitive Grants

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before March 5, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6625, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW,

Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dHynek@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to JoAnna Grable, (301) 713-1364, or at JoAnna.Grabble@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

In 2003, NOAA awarded approximately 600 grants for sponsored fishery-related activities involving about \$350 million in Federal funds. About 60% of the total number of fishery grant awards (360) were made on a noncompetitive basis. Many of these noncompetitive grants provide pass through funds to states and other entities to support such ongoing activities as: fisheries research and data collection, participation in international fisheries commissions, fishery management council operations, and the operation of fish hatcheries.

This information collection will provide noncompetitive grant applicants and recipients with standardized guidance on information required by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in a project narrative (as part of a grant application) and the information required in interim and final performance reports. The information collection will assist NOAA and NMFS staff in the review and management of the noncompetitive grants.

Currently, NMFS does not require grant applicants and recipients of noncompetitive grants to provide standardized information in the project narratives (application) and performance reports. Applicants for and recipients of noncompetitive grants provide information they deem appropriate, or information prescribed by their particular organization. NMFS requests applicants to provide standardized information in project narrative to aid Agency staff in determining whether proposed activities are: allowed under the funding authority; considered technically sound; investigators qualified; and budget costs correlate to proposed work activities. Similarly, NMFS requests recipients of noncompetitive grants to provide standardized information about ongoing or completed grant activities to assist staff in evaluating and certifying whether the recipient is meeting or has met the goals and objectives established in the award agreement.

II. Method of Collection

The Agency will send a letter or e-mail to noncompetitive grant applicants

and include a written format describing what information is required in the project narrative portion of a grant application. When the application is approved for funding, the Agency will include interim and final performance report formats as a special award condition to the grant agreement. These report formats will prescribe all information that must be included by the recipient in performance reports.

III. Data

OMB Number: None.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: State, Local or Tribal Government; not-for-profit institutions; business or other for profit organizations; and household or individuals.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 360.

Estimated Time Per Response: 10 hours for a Project Narrative; 5 hours for a Progress Report; and 15 hours for a Final Report.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 12,600.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$21,960.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: December 23, 2003.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 04-93 Filed 1-2-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 122903F]

Mid-Atlantic 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 Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and its Demersal Species Committee (meeting as a Council committee of the whole together with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board), Ecosystems Committee, and Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish Committee will hold a public meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20, through Thursday, January 22, 2004. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Old Town Holiday Inn Select, 480 King Street, Old Town Alexandria, VA, telephone: 703-549-6080.

Council address: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19904, telephone: 302-674-2331.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Daniel T. Furlong, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; telephone: 302-674-2331, ext. 19.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On Tuesday, January 20, the Demersal Species Committee meeting as a Council Committee of the Whole with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board will meet from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. On Wednesday, January 21, The Ecosystems Committee will meet from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish Committee will meet from 10 a.m. to noon. Council will meet from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. On Thursday, January 22, Council will meet from 8 a.m. until approximately 3 p.m.

Agenda items for the Council's committees and the Council itself are: Address Framework 5 multi-year specification action for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass; Address how to deal with rebuilt stocks, and review essential fish habitat (EFH) issues and develop comments on NMFS EFH final rule, address use of habitat areas of particular concerns and marine