

and Budget under OMB Control No. 0693-0019.

The text of the request follows:

May 3, 1996, PFS/TECO Corporation, 2402 Daniels Street, Madison, WI 53704

Dr. Manager, NVCASE Program: Please accept this formal request from PFS/TECO Corporation for NVCASE to develop a specific evaluation program for third party quality assurance certification agencies involved in the inspection and certification agencies involved in the inspection and certification of structural use panels (plywood and oriented strand board) and engineered wood panels, structural glued laminated timber, prefabricated wood I-joists, composite structural lumber, sandwich panels either rigid or foam), particleboard and construction adhesives used in these products.

Using the NIST outline for submitting this request, the following is the background information that should assist NIST in moving ahead with this application.

#### Foreign Requirements

PFS/TECO Corporation is applying to NIST for development of a NVCASE program in the above wood products area in response to programs currently run by the Japanese Government and the Canadian Government that currently allow for, or will soon allow for, the mutual recognition of a NVCASE certified third party quality assurance certification and inspection agency.

The Japanese program for the wood products and components listed above is under the direction of the Japanese Agricultural Service (JAS) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). Dr. Belinda Collins of NIST made a recent presentation to JAS and MAFF at a Tokyo meeting in which she described the capability of NVCASE to certify United States third party quality assurance certification and inspection agencies. This was done to pave the way for JAS/MAFF to recognize NVCASE certified third party agencies.

This application is a follow-up to that presentation in that PFS/TECO has already obtained the first private sector Foreign Testing Organization (FTO) recognition granted by JAS for plywood, OSB and engineered wood products. This was done at great expense (over \$500,000) and three years of arduous effort. It would be beneficial to PFS/TECO to receive NVCASE recognition acceptable to JAS/MAFF in lieu of the continuing costly trips to Tokyo and costly audits with Japanese staff coming to the United States to maintain the current JAS FTO recognition. The audit and maintenance of a NVCASE recognition would be within the continental United States at greatly reduced expense to PFS/TECO when contrasted to current JAS/FTO approval maintenance costs.

The Canadian program is run by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) under the SCC "Criteria and Procedures for Accreditation of Certification Organizations". The existing North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) allows for mutual recognition by Canada and the United States of each other country's certified third party

testing laboratories and third party quality assurance certification and inspection organizations.

PFS/TECO was able to successfully become certified via NIST's NVLAP program for its wood products testing laboratories which had led to its mutual acceptance in Canada for wood products testing purposes. However, with no existing parallel NVCASE program, PFS/TECO is currently undergoing a difficult, time consuming application with the SCC in Canada with an estimate time for completion of up to two years and at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. Meanwhile, existing Canadian third party wood product quality assurance inspection and certification agencies with their prior SCC approval (obtained years ago as a requirement within Canada) are readily accepted here in the United States under NAFTA. The quick development of the NVCASE program for wood products based third party certification and inspection agencies would put PFS/TECO back on a "level playing field" at, again, a greatly reduced cost and at a faster turn-around compared to the deliberate, slow pace of the Canadian SCC approval process.

#### Industry Sector

As stated in our opening paragraph, the industry sector is wood panels, engineered wood components and related wood based structural products and adhesives. These include:

*Plywood*—Currently certified to NIST/DOC Standard PS1-95

*Oriented Strand Board (OSB)*—Currently certified to NIST/DOC Standard PS 2-92

*Structural Use Panels*—Either PS 1 or PS 2 certified

Additionally, all of the following industry sector are certified to a wide range of ASTM and ANSI standards and/or PS 2:

*Wood Composite Panels*

*Structural Glued Laminated Timber*

*Prefabricated Wood I-Joists*

*Composite Structural Lumber*

*Sandwich Panels (Rigid or Foam)*

*Particleboard*

*Construction adhesives*—used in all of the above products

#### Program Area

The program area would cover product certification only. The testing laboratory portion is already covered by NVLAP and PFS/TECO is certified as a testing laboratory for all of the above wood products or adhesives under NVLAP.

#### Level of Recognition

The program would involve direct accreditation by NVCASE as the NAFTA agreement allows reciprocal recognition by Canada by NVCASE certified third party certification and inspection agencies. PFS/TECO believes that NIST, via Dr. Belinda Collins, is negotiating similar reciprocal recognition of NVCASE by JAS/MAFF for use in the Japanese market segment that PFS/TECO currently serves via its own FTO certification and engineered wood certification by JAS/MAFF.

#### Recommended Criteria/Technical Requirements

The recommended criteria would include PS 1-95 and PS 2-92 issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce coupled with a wide range of ASTM and ANSI standards dealing with the various physical property testing or measurement approaches for plywood, OSB, and their related engineered wood components. Please refer to PFS/TECO's NVLAP accreditation of file at NIST which details the over 50 ASTM and ANSI standards involved in these various wood products and components.

#### Rationale

Covered in the above discussion are the difficulties, costs and extensive time involved in directly achieving recognition by the JAS/MAFF for Japan and the SCC for Canada. That alone should suffice as the justifying rationale for a NVCASE program as Canada via NAFTA already recognized NVCASE certified third parties and NIST appears to be successfully negotiating NVCASE recognition with JAS/MAFF in Japan.

Both Canada and Japan do not recognize other private sector accreditation approaches or non-Federal government approaches for third party quality assurance inspection and certification agencies such as via the model building codes, or via various state governments. Japan and Canada will only accept, at this time, a Federal government program such as NVCASE in that it parallels their own national, centralized governmental approach to certification of third party organizations.

If this NVCASE program were to move ahead, PFS/TECO believes that it would ease or further ease market access for the large segments of the U.S. plywood and OSB industry into Japan or into Canada. PFS/TECO is aware of approximately ten other U.S. private sector third party quality assurance inspection and certification agencies that would benefit by and would probably participate in this NVCASE program if it were developed into fruition.

After review of the above, please advise what NIST's opinion and response is. If there are any questions or if I can provide additional details, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,  
Michael J. Slifka, P.E.,  
Executive Vice President.

Interested parties should respond in writing to the above address. All comments submitted will become part of the public record and will be available for inspection and copying at the U.S. Department of Commerce Central Reference and Records and Inspection Facility, Room 6020, Herbert C. Hoover Building, 14th and Constitution Avenue, Washington, DC 20230.

Dated: August 6, 1996.  
Samuel Kramer,  
Associate Director.  
[FR Doc. 96-20560 Filed 8-12-96; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3510-13-M

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 080596F]

### Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a public meeting.

**DATES:** The meetings are scheduled as follows: Standing and Special Red Drum Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), September 4, 1996, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Standing and Special Reef Fish SSC, September 5, 1996, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn Crown Plaza, 333 Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130; telephone: 504-525-9444.

*Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 5401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 331, Tampa, FL 33609.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Wayne Swingle, Executive Director; telephone: 813-228-2815.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On September 4, beginning at 10:00 a.m., the Red Drum SSC will review an assessment on status of the red drum stock in the Gulf of Mexico. They will also review a report of a Scientific Stock Assessment Panel which will recommend a range of acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the Gulf fishery.

On September 5, beginning at 8:00 a.m. the Reef Fish SSC will review an assessment prepared by LGL Ecological Research Associates, Inc. of Bryan, Texas, of the assessment procedure and data utilized by NMFS in preparing the annual stock assessment for Gulf red snapper. They will also review the comments of NMFS and Council Scientific Stock Assessment Panel on the LGL assessment.

The SSC will develop its recommendations on these two issues for consideration by the Council at its September 9-13, 1996 meeting in New Orleans.

#### Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by August 28, 1996.

Dated: August 7, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

[FR Doc. 96-20621 Filed 8-12-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 080596H]

### North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Committee Meetings

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) plan teams will hold meetings the week of August 26, in Seattle, WA.

**DATES:** The meetings will begin at 1:00 p.m. on August 26, and continue through August 30.

**ADDRESSES:** The meetings will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Building 4, Room 2079, Seattle, WA,.

*Council address:* North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dave Witherell or Jane DiCosimo, telephone: 907-271-2809.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The agenda for the meetings will include the following subjects.

1. Review available stock assessments and catch statistics and prepare preliminary stock and economic assessment documents for the 1997 groundfish fisheries in the GOA and BSAI.

2. Review proposals for amendments to the groundfish fishery management plans for the GOA and BSAI.

#### 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 6, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

[FR Doc. 96-20542 Filed 8-12-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 080596G]

### North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Committee Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Improved Retention/Improved Utilization Committee (Committee) will meet September 5-6, 1996, in Seattle, WA.

**DATES:** September 5-6, 1996, beginning at 8:30 a.m. on September 5, and concluding by 5:00 p.m. on September 6.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Room 2079, Building 4, Seattle, WA.

*Council address:* North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Chris Oliver, telephone: (907) 271-2809.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Committee will review comments received on the draft analysis of measures to improve retention and utilization in the groundfish fisheries and prepare recommendations to provide to the Council at their meeting, September 18-22, 1996, in Sitka, Alaska.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is 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 6, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

[FR Doc. 96-20543 Filed 8-12-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 080696A]

### Permits; Foreign Fishing

In accordance with a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of State, the National Marine Fisheries Service publishes for public review and comment summaries of applications received by the Secretary of State requesting permits for foreign fishing vessels to operate in the Exclusive