

Mitsubishi, Ford, PACCAR, Flxible, General Motors (GM), Navistar, Bugatti Automobili, and Lotus), four associations (the California Trucking Association (CTA), the National Truck Equipment Association (NTEA), American Trucking Associations (ATA), and the American Automobile Manufacturers Association (AAMA)), and two safety groups (the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates)).

Commenters expressed differing views about the need to require crossover fuel line protection. Advocates, NFPA, CTA and Mitsubishi supported the proposal. Mack, ATA, NTEA, AAMA, GM, Ford, Bugatti, and Lotus opposed it. ATA, NTEA, and AAMA stated that they were not aware of any safety problem associated with fires resulting from crossover line failure. ATA stated that manufacturers have already recognized the need to provide fuel systems with greater resistance to fuel leakage and are voluntarily providing them. Mack, NTEA, and GM stated that there was a trend in the industry away from crossover fuel lines.

Commenters addressed other issues including harmonization with a SAE Recommended Practice, frangible valves, cost and application, leadtime, and the proposed test procedures and performance requirements.

IV. Agency Decision

After reviewing its own reports and the public comments on this proposal, NHTSA has decided not to issue a requirement for crossover fuel line protection and to terminate rulemaking on this issue.

To complete rulemaking on the proposed amendment, the agency would need to devote significant agency resources to refine the proposed test procedures. The agency believes such an expenditure of additional resources is not warranted, given the limited and uncertain benefits that could be obtained from such a requirement.

The comments show that the vehicle manufacturers have developed and implemented new designs that eliminate the need for crossover lines in many vehicles. The agency anticipates that the trend toward new systems that eliminate crossover lines will continue. In the interval since the NPRM was issued, the industry has significantly improved their design for those vehicles that will continue to use crossover lines. Based on information supplied by the industry, the agency estimates that less than 50 percent of trucks are still produced with crossover lines. Of these

vehicles, 90 percent are equipped with substantial protective structures that are able to withstand the 2,500-pound test load proposed in the NPRM. Thus, the agency believes that the proposed requirement would affect fewer than five percent of the new truck population. The agency further believes that even fewer heavy trucks will be equipped with crossover lines in the future.

The agency estimated in the NPRM that the requirement would prevent one fatality and two nonfatal injuries per year due to fires (and 0.6 fatality and 55 nonfatal injuries due to secondary crashes caused by fuel spillage). In view of the trends in manufacturing practices noted above, the agency believes that these estimates overstate the benefits that would result in the future from the requirement.

In addition to the reduced benefits from the requirement, the per-vehicle costs would have been substantial (\$50 or more per truck and \$1,000 per test).

For the reasons set forth above, NHTSA has decided to terminate the rulemaking action to amend Standard No. 301 that would have required crossover fuel line protection.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 322, 30111, 30115, 30117, and 30166; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.50.

Issued on: September 24, 1997.

L. Robert Shelton,

Associate Administrator for Safety Performance Standards.

[Signature page for RIN 2127-AC62]

(Termination of Rulemaking)

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 285, 630, 644, and 678

[I.D. 100897B]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Scoping Document; Extension of Comment Period

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

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments; extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the extension of the public comment period on the scoping document for Highly Migratory Species (HMS) fishery

management. The public comment period is hereby extended from December 1, 1997, to January 9, 1998, to give members of the public additional time to review and comment on the issues and options that are discussed in the scoping document. Any written comments received by that date will be considered by NMFS in developing a set of alternatives for management measures.

DATES: Acceptance of written comments is extended from December 1, 1997, to January 9, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests for copies of the scoping document should be directed to the Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD. 20910. PHONE:(301)713-2347. FAX: (301)713-1917. The scoping document is also available on the Internet at <http://kingfish.ssp.nmfs.gov/sfa/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Liz Lauck or Jill Stevenson, (301) 713-2347.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS is considering management measures for the fisheries for Atlantic tunas, Atlantic swordfish, Atlantic shark, and Atlantic billfish to be included in a comprehensive Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic tunas, swordfish and sharks, and an amendment to the Billfish FMP. Options for management may include long-term rebuilding programs, reallocation of quotas, recreational bag limits, commercial trip limits, minimum size restrictions, time/area closures, regional quotas, consistency between state and Federal regulations, gear restrictions, limited access, identification and protection of essential fish habitat, and permitting and reporting requirements.

Consistent with the new requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, NMFS established an HMS Advisory Panel (AP) and a Billfish AP to assist in developing and amending FMPs for HMS species. In the case of any species identified as overfished, the APs will also assist in developing rebuilding programs. The scoping document, developed with input from the APs, outlines major issues and options under consideration.

NMFS has held a series of scoping meetings to gather public input on a broad range of issues and options that may be considered in addressing HMS issues (62 FR 54035, October 17, 1997). Public input is also sought through written comments that may be mailed or faxed to the Highly Migratory Species Management Division (see **ADDRESSES**). Based upon several requests from the

public as well as the fact that extension of the comment period is not anticipated to delay development of the FMP, NMFS is extending the comment period on this scoping document from December 1, 1997 to January 9, 1998.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 20, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,

*Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 112097E]

New England Fishery Management Council; Meeting

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

ACTION: Public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a 3-day public meeting to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 1997, at 10 a.m., on Wednesday, December 10, 1997, at 8:30 a.m., and on Thursday, December 11, 1997, at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Peabody Marriott, 8A Centennial Drive, Peabody, MA; telephone (978) 977-9700. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1097; telephone (781) 231-0422.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council (781) 231-0422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Tuesday, December 9, 1997

After introductions the Council meeting will begin with the Multispecies Monitoring Committee Annual Report. The presentation will include landings projections for the 1997 fishing year, target total allowable catches (TACs) for the 1998 fishing year, options for reaching or maintaining the rebuilding plan fishing mortality objectives for cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder stocks, and the

status of fisheries for pollock, redfish, winter flounder, witch flounder, American plaice, windowpane flounder, and white hake.

Following the report, the Council's Groundfish Committee will discuss and seek approval of initial action on Framework Adjustment 25 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The adjustment would include measures to meet the 1998 fishing year rebuilding plan objectives (based on the report of the Multispecies Monitoring Committee) through the use of any of the following measures—area closures, trip limits, adjustments to days-at-sea (DAS) or gear modifications. The framework adjustment would also include measures to adjust the opening date of the Cultivator Shoal Whiting Exempted Fishery, require a raised footrope trawl in the Small Mesh Area 2 Exempted Fishery, restrict or prohibit the use of "streetsweeper" gear, and modify the regulations that now require vessel monitoring systems (VMS) on all individual DAS vessels. VMS options under consideration would include, but are not limited to, voluntary use of VMS, mandatory use only on vessels with DAS allocations over a specified level, or mandatory use only on vessels with specific violations. The framework may also prohibit fishing for regulated species in groundfish closed areas by vessels using exempted gears such as lobster pots, even when such vessels are fishing in the DAS program.

Wednesday, December 10, 1997

If necessary, the Council will continue consideration of Framework Adjustment 25. The Overfishing Definition Review Panel will present a preliminary report on new overfishing definitions developed to comply with the Sustainable Fisheries Act. Species to be discussed include Atlantic sea scallops, Georges Bank yellowtail flounder, monkfish, Atlantic mackerel, and possibly others. Prior to addressing sea scallop issues there will be reports from the Scallop Advisory Panel and the Scallop Plan Development Team (PDT). The Scallop Committee will then recommend final measures to be included in Amendment 7 to the Scallop Fishery Management Plan. Currently, the proposal contains a program to allow consolidation of DAS and the use of closed area management. There will also be further consideration of Framework Adjustment 10, an action to modify the scallop DAS schedule following the third-year review of the DAS scallop effort reduction program. There will be a review of committee discussions on VMS regulations and

measures to allow scallop vessels to fish in the areas closed for groundfish conservation. After reports from the Herring Advisory Panel and PDT, the Herring Committee will seek approval of proposed fishery management plan objectives, as well as the array of management measures to be discussed at public hearings. Measures may include vessel/dealer/operator permits, spawning area closures, a target TAC, vessel size limits, prohibitions on directed mealing, area management, limits on fishing time, and possibly other measures.

Thursday, December 11, 1997

The Monkfish Advisory Panel and the Monkfish PDT will report to the Council, followed by consideration and approval of monkfish measures for Amendment 9 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP. There may be a request to the Secretary of Commerce to implement interim management measures for the monkfish fishery. The afternoon session will begin with reports from the Council Chairman, Executive Director, NMFS Regional Administrator, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaisons, and representatives of the Coast Guard and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). There will be a briefing on the recent Habitat Advisory Panel meeting and progress on the development of essential fish habitat information. This will be followed by an update on revisions to draft Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan to manage ocean quahogs in the Gulf of Maine.

The Chairman of the Council's Lobster Committee will review the ASMFC's final fishery management plan for American lobster and discuss options to address any concerns with the plan. There also may be consideration of future management strategies, if necessary, to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Fisheries Act. The meeting will adjourn after the conclusion of any other outstanding Council business.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council actions will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice.