

Applications must be submitted in accordance with 7 CFR part 1738. This part and an application guide to assist in the preparation of applications are available in the Internet at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/broadband.htm>. Application guides may also be requested from RUS by contacting the agency contact.

Agency Contacts

For application information, contact the following individual: Kenneth Kuchno, Program Manager "Broadband Program, Telecommunications Program, RUS/USDA, Room 2846, Stop 1599, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1599, (202) 690-4673.

Eligible Rural Community

The definition of eligible rural community in Section 601(b)(2) of the Rural Electrification Act (7 U.S.C. 950bb)(b)(2), qualifying for financial assistance under the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guaranty Program, has been amended by provisions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004, to mean any area of the United States that is not contained in an incorporated city or town with a population in excess of 20,000 inhabitants. Therefore, an applicant no longer must demonstrate that it is not located in an area designated as a standard metropolitan statistical area. This change supersedes and nullifies contrary provisions in regulations implementing the broadband program found at 7 CFR part 1738.

Minimum and Maximum Loan Amounts

Loans and loan guarantees under this authority will not be made for less than \$100,000. Maximum loan amounts apply only to the direct 4 percent loan program. The maximum amount available for any one applicant for a direct 4 percent loan is \$7,500,000.

Minimum Rate of Data Transmission Criteria

The Secretary of Agriculture determines what qualifies as broadband service for the purpose of determining eligibility for financial assistance under the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program. During fiscal year 2004, to qualify as broadband service, the minimum rate-of-data transmission shall be 200 kilobits/second in the customer's connection to the network, both from the provider to

the customer (downstream) and from the customer to the provider (upstream).

State Allocations

The annual state allocation will not be made for Fiscal Year 2004. To ensure the obligation of funds by April 1, as required by the Farm Bill, an annual application submission deadline of January 31 for funding from the state allocation reserves was adopted and published in the enacting regulations. With the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act on January 23, 2004, insufficient time remained for the submission of applications by the regulatory deadline.

4 Percent Direct Loans:

An applicant will be eligible for a direct 4 percent loan if: (1) the community being served has a population of less than 2,500, and is not currently receiving broadband service as defined at § 1738.11(b)(1); (2) the per capita income in the county being served as a percent of national per capita income, is not more than 65 percent of the national per capita income, as determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, at www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis, and using the data for the most recent year published as of the date of application; and (3) the population density, calculated as the total number of persons in the service area divided by the square miles of the service area is not more than 20 persons per square mile.

Dated: March 24, 2004.

Hilda Gay Legg,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 04-6951 Filed 3-26-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

United States Travel and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

AGENCY: International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

DATES: April 16, 2004.

TIME: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

PLACE: Capital Hilton—Senate Room, 1001 16th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20036.

SUMMARY: The United States Travel and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

("Board") will hold a Board meeting on April 16, 2004 at the Capital Hilton Hotel.

The Board will discuss the design, development and subsequent implementation of an international advertising and promotional campaign, which will seek to encourage individuals from the United Kingdom to travel to the United States for the express purpose of engaging in tourism. The meeting will be open to the public. Time will be permitted for public comment. To sign up for public comment, please contact Julie Heizer by 5 p.m. EDT Wednesday, April 14, 2004. She may be contacted at U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW., Room 7025, Washington, DC 20230; via fax at (202) 482-2887; or, via e-mail at promotion@tinnet.ita.doc.gov.

Written comments concerning Board affairs are welcome any time before or after the meeting. Written comments should be directed to Julie Heizer. Minutes will be available within 90 days of this meeting.

The Board is mandated by Pub. L. 108-7, Section 210. As directed by Pub. L. 108-7, Section 210, the Secretary of Commerce shall design, develop and implement an international advertising and promotional campaign, which seeks to encourage individuals to travel to the United States. The Board shall recommend to the Secretary of Commerce the appropriate coordinated activities for funding. This campaign shall be a multi-media effort that seeks to leverage the Federal dollars with contributions of cash and in-kind products unique to the travel and tourism industry. The Board was chartered in August of 2003 and will expire on August 8, 2005.

For further information, phone Julie Heizer, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI), International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce at (202) 482-0140. This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to OTTI.

Dated: March 23, 2004.

Julie Heizer,

Deputy Director for Industry Relations, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries.

[FR Doc. 04-6867 Filed 3-26-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-25-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****[I.D. 032204I]****Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)**

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

ACTION: Notification of a proposal for EFPs to conduct experimental fishing; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Northeast Region, NMFS (Assistant Regional Administrator) has made a preliminary determination that the subject EFP application contains all the required information and warrants further consideration. The Assistant Regional Administrator has also made a preliminary determination that the activities authorized under the EFP would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Northeast (NE) Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue the EFP. Therefore, NMFS announces that the Assistant Regional Administrator proposes to recommend that an EFP be issued that would allow up to 20 commercial fishing vessels to conduct fishing operations that are otherwise restricted by the regulations governing the fisheries of the Northeastern United States. The EFP would allow for exemptions from the FMP as follows: The GOM Rolling Closure Areas; the Cashes Ledge and Western Gulf of Maine (WGOM) Closure Areas; the Days-at-Sea (DAS) notification requirements; the effort-control program (DAS); and minimum fish size restrictions for the temporary retention of undersized fish for data collection purposes.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments on this document must be received on or before April 13, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Comments on this notice may be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is DA453@noaa.gov. Include

in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: "Comments on CCCHFA GOM Cod Tagging Study." Written comments should be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on CCCHFA GOM Cod Tagging Study." Comments may also be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brian Hooker, Fishery Management Specialist, phone 978-281-9220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association (CCCHFA) submitted an application for an EFP on March 8, 2004. The application was complete as received. The experimental fishing application requests authorization to allow the catch, tagging, and release of Atlantic cod using rod and reel only. The primary goal of the study is to provide high quality scientific data on the current distribution and movement patterns of Atlantic cod in the GOM. It is anticipated that the improved understanding of the cod stocks expected to result from this study will ultimately enable better and more effective management of the cod fishery.

The study proposes to catch, tag, and release 2,000 individual cod during 20 dedicated tagging trips, using up to 20 commercial fishing vessels. The participating vessels would catch cod using rod and reel with treble hooks eliminated from the jigs, temporarily hold cod alive in tanks aboard the vessel while processing and tagging the fish, and return the fish alive to the sea. Any other species caught would be released as soon as practicable. During the study, no fish of any species would be landed or retained for commercial sale. Cod would be tagged on dedicated tagging trips focused on, but not limited to, Jeffery's Ledge, Platt's Bank, Cashes Ledge, Massachusetts Bay, Race Point, and Cape Cod Bay. The study would likely have minimal impacts on the target species in the area due to the use of rod and reel as the catch method and efforts to minimize trauma and release all specimens alive. Tagging program staff would be on board the vessel for training purposes and to observe 20 percent of the dedicated trips to assist with tagging operations.

The research study would occur between April 15–December 31, 2004, in an area encompassed by the following coordinates: From the outer Cape Cod shoreline at 42° N lat., 70° W long.; east along 42° N lat. to 69° W long.; then north along 69° W long. to

43°30' N; and then west along 43°30' N lat. to the Maine coastline.

This EFP would allow for exemptions from the Northeast (NE) Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) as follows: The GOM Rolling Closure Areas specified at 50 CFR 648.81(g)(1)(i)-(v); the Cashes Ledge and Western Gulf of Maine (WGOM) Closure Areas specified at § 648.81(h)(1) and (i)(1); the Days-at-Sea (DAS) notification requirements specified at § 648.10; the effort-control program (DAS) as specified at § 648.82(a); and minimum fish size restrictions specified at § 648.83(a) for the temporary retention of undersized fish for data collection purposes.

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

Dated: March 24, 2004.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 04-6969 Filed 3-26-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****[I.D. 111403B]****Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Oceanographic Surveys off the Northern Yucatan Peninsula in the Gulf of Mexico**

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

ACTION: Notice of issuance of an incidental take authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals by harassment incidental to conducting oceanographic surveys off the northern Yucatan Peninsula in the Gulf of Mexico to Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO).

DATES: Effective from February 27, 2004, through February 26, 2005.

ADDRESSES: A copy of the IHA and the application are available by writing to Mr. P. Michael Payne, Chief, Marine Mammal Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225, or by telephoning the contact listed here. A copy of the application containing a list of the