

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: October 29, 2015.

Jeffrey N. Lonergan,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-27951 Filed 11-2-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

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

RIN 0648-XE278

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Groundfish Committee to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: This meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2015, at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Radisson Hotel Providence Airport, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; phone: (401) 739-3000; fax: (401) 732-9309.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Agenda**

The committee will receive an overview from the Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) on draft alternatives in Framework Adjustment 55 (FW 55) specifications, changes to the groundfish monitoring program, and other management measures and draft impacts analysis. They will also review

a presentation on the results from Northeast Fisheries Science Center's bioeconomic model for recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Maine. The committee also plans to consider recommendations from the Groundfish Advisory Panel, regarding FW 55 and 2016 Council priorities. They will also consider recommendations from the Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP), regarding FW 55, FY 2016 Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock recreational measures, and 2016 Council priorities. The committee also plans to develop recommendations to the Council regarding preferred alternatives in FW 55, FY 2016 recreational measures, and 2016 Council priorities. Also on the agenda is to discuss GARFO's Recreational Implementation Plan, review RAP recommendations to the Committee, and develop recommendations to the Council. They will also discuss other business as necessary.

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.

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

Dated: October 29, 2015.

Jeffrey N. Lonergan,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-27949 Filed 11-2-15; 8:45 am]

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

RIN 0648-XE287

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Scallop Advisory Panel on Wednesday, November 18, 2015, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 18, 2015, at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 739-3000; fax: (401) 732-9309.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Agenda**

The Advisory Panel will review Amendment 19 alternatives, analyses, and public comments received to date and make final recommendations. Amendment 19 was developed to consider measures to better align fishery allocations with the start of the scallop fishing year. The Advisory Panel will also review Framework 27 alternatives and analyses and make final recommendations. Framework 27 was developed to consider fishery allocations for fishing year 2016 and default measures for fishing year 2017. They will also review progress to date and potentially provide input on a future Council sponsored workshop related to concerns raised about inshore scallop fishing patterns. Finally, the Advisory Panel will review and potentially provide input on draft guidance prepared by NMFS related to the Magnuson Act requirement to evaluate limited access privilege programs within five years after adoption. Other business may be discussed, if time permits.

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

Dated: October 29, 2015.

Jeffrey N. Lonergan,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-27950 Filed 11-2-15; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No.: PTO-P-2015-0055]

Proposed Pilot Program Exploring an Alternative Approach to Institution Decisions in Post Grant Administrative Reviews; Reopening of Period for Comments

AGENCY: United States Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Request for comments; reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is requesting comments on a proposed pilot program pertaining to the institution and conduct of the post grant administrative trials provided for in the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act (AIA), Public Law 112-29, 125 Stat. 284 (2011). The AIA provides for the following post grant administrative trials: *Inter Partes* Review (IPR), Post-Grant Review (PGR), and Covered Business Method Patent Review (CBM). The USPTO currently has a panel of three Administrative Patent Judges (APJs) decide whether to institute a trial, and then normally has the same three-APJ panel conduct the trial, if instituted. The USPTO is considering a pilot program under which the determination of whether to institute an IPR will be made by a single APJ, with two additional APJs being assigned to the IPR if a trial is instituted. Under this pilot program, any IPR trial will be conducted by a panel of three APJs, two of whom were not involved in the determination to institute the IPR. The USPTO published a request for comments in the **Federal Register** on August 25, 2015, seeking public comment on a proposed pilot program pertaining to the institution and conduct of these post grant administrative trial proceedings. See Request for Comments on a Proposed Pilot Program Exploring an Alternative Approach to Institution Decisions in Post Grant Administrative Reviews, 80 FR 51540 (Aug. 25, 2015). The USPTO is now extending the period for public comment until November 18, 2015.

DATES: *Comment Deadline Date:* Written comments on the notice published August 15, 2015 (80 FR 51540) must be

received on or before November 18, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Comments must be sent by electronic mail message over the Internet addressed to: *PTABTrialPilot@uspto.gov*.

Electronic comments submitted in plain text are preferred, but also may be submitted in ADOBE® portable document format or MICROSOFT WORD® format. The comments will be available for viewing via the USPTO's Internet Web site (*http://www.uspto.gov*). Because comments will be made available for public inspection, information that the submitter does not desire to make public, such as an address or phone number, should not be included in the comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott R. Boalick, Vice Chief Administrative Patent Judge by telephone at (571) 272-9797.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The first petitions for AIA post grant administrative trials were filed on September 16, 2012. Since then, over 3,600 petitions have been filed, and over 1,500 trials have been instituted. The USPTO has thus far been able to meet the demands placed on its resources created by the unexpectedly heavy workload. The Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB) has issued over 2,200 decisions on institution and over 450 final written decisions. In three-plus years, the PTAB has not missed one statutory or regulatory deadline. At the same time, the PTAB has reduced the backlog of *ex parte* appeals.

Notwithstanding the success-to-date, the USPTO is proactively looking for ways to enhance its operations for the benefit of its stakeholders and therefore is interested in exploring alternative approaches that might improve its efficiency in handling AIA post grant proceedings while being fair to both sides and continuing to provide high quality decisions. Based upon comments received from the public through public fora and formal requests, the agency is considering a pilot program to test changing how the institution phase of a post grant proceeding is handled.

Once trial is instituted, the AIA mandates that the resulting trial be conducted before a three-member panel of the PTAB. Generally, under current practice, the same panel of three APJs decides whether to institute and, if instituted, handles the remainder of the proceeding, much like how federal district court judges handle cases through motions to dismiss, summary judgment, and trial. But a three-judge panel of the PTAB is not required under

the statute prior to institution, and the USPTO believes it is prudent to explore other potentially more efficient options, especially given that the number of petitions filed may continue to increase.

To date and currently, the agency has intended to meet the resource demands on the PTAB due to both AIA post grant proceedings and *ex parte* appeals by hiring additional judges. Even with continued hiring, however, increases in filings and the growing number of cases may strain the PTAB's continuing ability to make timely decisions and meet statutory deadlines. Therefore, the agency wishes to explore and gain data on a potentially more efficient alternative to the current three-judge institution model. Having a single judge decide whether to institute trial in a post grant proceeding, instead of a panel of three judges, would allow more judges to be available to attend to other matters, such as reducing the *ex parte* appeal backlog and handling more post grant proceedings. The request for comments on the proposed pilot indicated that written comments must be received on or before October 26, 2015. See *id.* at 51540. In view of stakeholder requests for additional time to submit comments on the new administrative trial proceedings, the USPTO is now extending the period for public comment until November 18, 2015.

Dated: October 29, 2015.

Michelle K. Lee,

Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

[FR Doc. 2015-28107 Filed 11-2-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notice Inviting Postsecondary Educational Institutions To Participate in Experiments Under the Experimental Sites Initiative; Federal Student Financial Assistance Programs Under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as Amended

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Secretary invites postsecondary institutions (institutions) that participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), to apply to participate in a new institution-based experiment under the Experimental Sites Initiative (ESI). Under the ESI, the Secretary has authority to grant waivers