The purpose of this notice is to adjust, in accordance with § 600.1013(b), the fee rate for the groundfish fishery. Section 600.1013(b) directs NMFS to recalculate the fee rate that will be reasonably necessary to ensure reduction loan repayment within the specified 30-year term. NMFS has determined that the current fee rate of 4.5 percent for the groundfish fishery is projected to collect more than the annual amortization amount needed for 2019. Therefore, NMFS is decreasing the fee rate to 4.0 percent for all landings beginning January 1, 2019. As of November 16, 2018, the outstanding balance on the groundfish fishery sub-loan was $21,075,537.

Fish buyers may continue to disburse collected fee deposits to NMFS by using www.pay.gov (http://www.pay.gov) or mail payments to NOAA Fisheries Pacific Coast Groundfish Buyback, P.O. Box 979059, St. Louis, MO 63197–9000. Fish buyers must include the fee collection report with the fee payment. Fish buyers using www.pay.gov will find an electronic fee collection report form. Fish buyers not using www.pay.gov may also access the NMFS website for a copy of the fee collection report at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/funding-and-financial-services/pacific-coast-groundfish-buyback.

The new 4.0 percent fee rate for the groundfish fishery will begin for all landings starting January 1, 2019. After this date, all groundfish-program fish sellers paying fees fishery shall begin paying groundfish program fees at the revised rate. After this date, all fees received by NMFS for the groundfish fishery shall be subject to the new fee rates regardless of the applicable fee month. The first due date for fee payments with the decreased rate will be February 14, 2019. Fee collection and submission shall follow previously established methods in § 600.1013 of the framework rule and in the final fee rule published in the Federal Register on July 13, 2005 (70 FR 40225).

Authority: The authority for this action is Pub. L. 107-206, Pub. L. 108-7, 16 U.S.C. 1861a (b) through (e), and 50 CFR 600.1000 et seq.

Dated: November 28, 2018.

Samuel D. Rauch III,
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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