by February 15 of the subsequent year. The Service will annually review monitoring reports and changes in Federal, State, or Tribal management.

(4) The Service may revoke Tier 1 designations for the following reasons:

(a) If changes in Federal, State, or Tribal laws, rules, regulations, or management plans or practices depart significantly from objectives detailed in a conservation strategy;

(b) If substantial grizzly bear mortality associated with incidental take or management actions occurs in areas within the occupied range but where specific mortality thresholds do not exist.

(D) Tier 2—The following exceptions apply to geographic areas identified in an MOU with the Service as Tier 2.

(1) Management activities excepted under Tier 2—Take associated with management activities is excepted under applicable Federal, State, and Tribal laws and regulations.

(a) Excepted deterrence techniques will be determined by the applicable Federal, State, or Tribal laws and regulations.

(b) When aiding sick or injured grizzly bears, authorized agencies may take orphaned cubs without prior authorization from the Service.

(c) Service oversight, excluding Service law enforcement investigations, will be carried out consistent with the monitoring and reporting requirements for Tier 2 set forth below in paragraph (b)(3)(xiv)(D)(3).

(2) Incidental take excepted under Tier 2—Incidental take is excepted, provided those activities are conducted in accordance with Federal, State, or Tribal laws and regulations.

(3) Monitoring and reporting requirements under Tier 2—Authorized agencies must submit an annual report to the Service for a given geographic area documenting the location, date, and type of all take resulting in the capture, relocation, or mortality of a grizzly bear within a calendar year on or by February 15 of the subsequent year. Additionally, this report must include demographic monitoring reports. The Service will annually review monitoring reports and changes in Federal, State, or Tribal management.

(4) The Service may revoke Tier 2 designations for the following reasons:

(a) The population falls below demographic objectives identified in the conservation strategy for one year;

(b) Occupancy of females with young falls below objectives set forth in strategies or plans;

(c) Female mortality exceeds thresholds for two consecutive years;

(d) Overall mortality exceeds thresholds for two consecutive years; or

(e) Changes in Federal, State, or Tribal laws, rules, regulations, or management plans or practices, or other circumstances depart significantly from the potential to achieve demographic objectives or mortality thresholds detailed in a conservation strategy.

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Brian R. Nesvik,

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 679 and 680

RIN 0648–BO21

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Amendment 129 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area; Amendment 58 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs; Economic Data Reporting Requirements Removal

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

ACTION: Notice of availability of fishery management plan amendments; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) submitted amendment 129 to the Fishery Management Plans for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI FMP) and amendment 58 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs (Crab FMP) to the Secretary of Commerce for review. If approved, amendments 129 and 58 would remove requirements for fishery participants to submit Economic Data Reports (EDRs) each year, reducing cost recovery fees and eliminating redundant reporting requirements. Amendments 129 and 58 are intended to promote the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the BSAI FMP, the Crab FMP, and other applicable laws.

DATES: Comments must be received no later than September 15, 2026.

ADDRESSES: A plain language summary of the proposed rule is available at *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2026-0463.* You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2026–0463, by either of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Visit *https://www.regulations.gov* and type NOAA–NMFS–2026–0463 in the Search box. Click on the ''Comment'' icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- *Mail:* Submit written comments to Gretchen Harrington, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region NMFS. Mail comments to P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802–1668.

Instructions: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on *https://www.regulations.gov* without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.,* name, address, *etc.*), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments. Enter ''N/A'' in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous.

Electronic copies of amendment 129 to the BSAI FMP and amendment 58 to the Crab FMP, the draft Regulatory Impact Review prepared for this action (the Analysis), and the draft Categorical Exclusion prepared for this action may be obtained from *https://www.regulations.gov* or from the NMFS Alaska Region website at *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/alaska.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephanie Warpinski, 907–586–7228

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that each regional fishery management council submit any FMP amendment it prepares to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial approval by the Secretary of Commerce. The Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires that NMFS, upon receiving an FMP amendment, immediately publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing that the amendment is available for public review and comment. This notice announces that proposed amendment 129 to the BSAI FMP and amendment 58 to the Crab FMP are available for public review and comment.

The Council prepared, and the Secretary approved, the BSAI FMP and Crab FMP under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*). The BSAI FMP and Crab FMP are implemented by regulations governing U.S. fisheries at 50 CFR parts 600, 679, and 680. The Council is authorized to prepare and recommend an FMP amendment for the conservation and management of a fishery covered under the FMP.

Background

Amendment 129 to the BSAI FMP would remove the EDR requirement for participants in the Amendment 80 Program in section 3.7.5.9 of the FMP. The Amendment 80 Program is a limited access privilege program (LAPP) that allocates specific BSAI non-pollock groundfish species and apportions prohibited species catch limits among trawl fishery sectors. By authorizing the formation of harvesting cooperatives for the trawl catcher/processor fleet, the program encourages a shift away from the ''race for fish'' toward more efficient, safe, and economically stable operations. The EDR for the Amendment 80 Program was implemented to assess the economic effects of the Amendment 80 Program on various components of the fishery, including skippers and crew to inform future management actions.

Amendment 58 to the Crab FMP would remove the EDR requirements for participants in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Crab Rationalization Program (Crab Program) in section 3.4.10 of the FMP. The Crab Program is a LAPP that allocates the total allowable catch of nine BSAI crab species among harvesters and processors. By replacing a ''race for fish'' with a quota system, the program aims to increase safety, improve economic stability, and promote long-term conservation of the fishery. The EDR for the crab EDR was to collect cost, revenue, ownership, and employment data on a periodic basis (based on scientific requirements) to provide information to study the impacts of the Crab Program as well as collecting data that could be used to analyze the economic and social impacts of future FMP amendments on industry, regions, and localities.

The Council recommended amendments 129 and 58 due to the inconsistent application of EDRs across LAPPs, the limited utility of EDRs to fishery management, and the high cost and reporting burden of EDRs to fishery participants and the high cost of maintaining EDRs to the Federal government. Currently, only three of the eight LAPPs in the North Pacific collect EDR data. By recommending removal of EDR requirements, the Council aims to consistently alleviate reporting requirements for programs. In addition, the EDR data does not inform decisions to open or close fisheries and is therefore not used in the active management of any fishery for which it is collected. As such, in recommending the removal of the EDRs, the Council deemed that the data collections are not necessary and do not provide sufficient value considering the costs and reporting burden to fishery participants. In its purpose and need statement, the Council also noted that it sought to minimize costs to the Federal government, which would also be accomplished by the elimination of the EDRs.

The Council and NMFS recognize that fishery participants are experiencing rising operational costs across all North Pacific LAPPs. By removing EDR requirements through amendment 129 and 58, NMFS attempts to reduce the associated annual cost and time burden estimate for participants and reduce agency costs associated with underutilized data collections. Since the EDR program has been in effect, there has been variability in the useability of the data. Through public testimony, fishery participants stated that the data generated limited and nuanced utility in informing management decisions relative to their costs.

NMFS is soliciting public comments on proposed amendments 129 and 58 through the end of the comment period (see **DATES**). NMFS intends to publish in the **Federal Register** and seek public comment on a proposed rule that would implement amendments 129 and 58 following NMFS's evaluation of the proposed rule under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Respondents do not need to submit the same comments on amendments 129 and 58 and the proposed rule. All relevant written comments received by the end of the applicable comment period on proposed amendments 129 and 58, whether specifically directed to the FMP amendments or the proposed rule, will be considered by NMFS in the approval/disapproval decision for amendments 129 and 58 and addressed in the response to comments in the final decision. Comments received after the end of the comment period for proposed amendments 129 and 58 may not be considered in the approval/disapproval decision on amendments 129 and 58. To be certain of consideration, comments would need to be received, not just postmarked or otherwise transmitted, by the last day of the comment period (see **DATES**).

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

Dated: July 15, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

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

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