

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## Availability of Seat for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

**AGENCY:** Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

**ACTION:** Notice and request for applications.

**SUMMARY:** The ONMS is seeking applications for the following positions on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council: Tourism—Lower Keys (member), and Tourism—Lower Keys (alternate). Applicants are chosen based upon their particular expertise and experience in relation to the seat for which they are applying; community and professional affiliations; philosophy regarding the protection and management of marine resources; and possibly the length of residence in the area affected by the sanctuary. Applicants who are chosen as members should expect to serve 3-year terms, pursuant to the council's Charter.

**DATES:** Applications are due by March 2, 2012.

**ADDRESSES:** Application kits may be obtained from Lilli Ferguson, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, 33 East Quay Rd., Key West, FL 33040. Completed applications should be sent to the same address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Lilli Ferguson, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, 33 East Quay Rd., Key West, FL 33040; (305) 292-0311 x245; [Lilli.Ferguson@noaa.gov](mailto:Lilli.Ferguson@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Per the council's Charter, if necessary, terms of appointment may be changed to provide for staggered expiration dates or member resignation mid term.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1431, *et seq.*  
(Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog Number 11.429 Marine Sanctuary Program)

Dated: January 13, 2012.

**Daniel J. Basta**

*Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA958

## Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permit

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

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is soliciting public comment on an exempted fishing permit application that would exempt up to three commercial fishing vessels from the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog Georges Bank Closure Area. This would continue research to assess the performance of an approved sampling protocol and to allow for continued sample collection and testing to obtain additional data in locations where toxin levels may be higher than were present during the pilot phase of the study. NMFS has made a preliminary determination that the exempted fishing permit application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before February 21, 2012.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on this notice may be submitted by email. The mailbox address for providing email comments is [NERO.EFP@noaa.gov](mailto:NERO.EFP@noaa.gov). Include in the subject line of the email comment the following document identifier: "Comments on 2012 GB PSP Closed Area Exemption."

Written comments should be sent to Daniel Morris, Acting Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on 2012 GB PSP Closed Area Exemption." Comments may also be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9135.

Copies of supporting documents referenced in this notice are available from NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, and are available via the Internet at [www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/clams](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/clams).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jason Berthiaume, Fishery Management Specialist, phone (978) 281-9177.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice is a revision to a previously published **Federal Register** notice (76 FR 65698). Complete project history is available in the previously published

notice. This **Federal Register** notice is being published because the objective of the proposed project and the list of participating vessels have changed.

Truex Enterprises initially submitted an EFP application on September 20, 2011. Truex requested the EFP to authorize one fishing vessel to access the Georges Bank Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) Closed Area in order to harvest clams and test them for the presence of PSP using a developmental sampling protocol. While this application was being reviewed and was available for public comment, the sampling protocol being tested was adopted into the National Shellfish Sanitation Program by the International Shellfish Sanitation Conference. Because testing of the sampling protocol was the primary objective of the pilot project, NMFS requested that Truex Enterprises resubmit an application for an EFP, as such testing no longer appeared necessary or relevant.

Truex Enterprises submitted a revised application on January 10, 2012. The revised purpose and goal of the project is to continue research to assess the performance of the approved protocol and to allow for sample collection and testing for another year to gain additional data from locations where toxin levels may be higher than were present during the pilot phase of the study. Although the onboard screening protocol was approved in October 2011, the protocol has only been fully evaluated at sea under the pilot study conditions where toxin levels were relatively low, below the regulatory action level. This EFP would allow industry to continue testing through another year, increasing the possibility to evaluate the protocol under varying toxin concentrations.

The revised application also requests up to two additional vessels, for a total of up to three vessels, to be listed under the EFP. With the additional vessels, it is expected that harvest levels would increase from 250,000 bushels (2,007,813 L) total in the original proposal, to approximately 250,000 bushels to 300,000 bushels (2,007,813 L–2,409,375 L) per vessel. It is expected that harvesting under an EFP would occur on approximately 70 fishing trips per vessel. Species to be harvested are surfclams and ocean quahogs utilizing a 170-inch (432-cm) hydraulic clam dredge for the vessel *F/V SEAWATCHER I*, and two 150-inch (381-cm) hydraulic clam dredges on the *F/V PRIDE* and *F/V PURSUIT*. Each vessel would make approximately 30 tows per day of 10 minutes each, at a speed of about 2.5 knots. There are no discards or known interactions with