

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

[I.D. 071599E]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Atlantic Tuna Fisheries; Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

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

ACTION: Applications for EFPs; extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: On November 4, 1999, NMFS requested comments on applications for EFPs. If issued, these EFPs would authorize the retention of Atlantic tunas (other than bluefin tuna) by vessels participating in the coastal driftnet fishery for Atlantic bonito. Comments were requested by December 6, 1999. NMFS is extending the comment period until January 21, 2000, in response to a request from the public and to allow for maximum opportunity to provide comments before the fishery starts in the spring of 2000.

DATES: Written comments on NMFS' consideration to issue such EFPs must be received on or before January 21, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Rebecca Lent, Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management Division (F/SF1), NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Copies of the EFP applications and the regulations governing issuance of EFPs are available from this address upon request.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sarah McLaughlin, 978-281-9260; fax: 978-281-9340.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 4, 1999, NMFS announced the receipt of applications for EFPs (64 FR 60173). If issued, these EFPs would authorize the retention of Atlantic tunas (other than bluefin tuna) by vessels participating in the coastal driftnet fishery for Atlantic bonito. NMFS anticipates the receipt of several more EFP applications for this same purpose. If EFPs are issued for the coastal driftnet fishery, NMFS would collect information on target catch and bycatch and assess the potential impacts of authorizing driftnet gear for certain Atlantic Highly Migratory Species fisheries. While this information is being collected, issuance of EFPs will reduce regulatory discards of Atlantic tunas. NMFS is seeking public comment on the potential impacts of issuing EFPs for the purpose of landing Atlantic tunas (other than bluefin tuna)

incidentally caught in the coastal driftnet fishery. Background and rationale were provided with the document published on November 4, 1999 (64 FR 60173), and are not repeated here.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: December 1, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 99-31671 Filed 12-6-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**Patent and Trademark Office****Request/Petition for Specialized Concurrent Handling Procedure**

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce (DoC), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on this new information collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before February 7, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5027, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230 or via the Internet at LEngelme@doc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to the attention of Magdalen Greenlief, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Office of the Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Patent Policy and Projects, Crystal Park 2, Suite 910, Washington, DC 20231, by telephone at (703) 305-8813, by facsimile transmission to (703) 305-8825, or by e-mail to mgreenlief@uspto.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Abstract**

The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), in cooperation with the European Patent Office (EPO) and the Japanese Patent Office (JPO) is conducting a pilot program for concurrent searches to be performed on corresponding applications that are filed in the Trilateral Offices (PTO, EPO, and JPO). The emphasis of this pilot program is to promote: (1) Greater

mutual understanding and further technical cooperation among the Trilateral Offices; (2) increased sharing of information among the Trilateral Offices; and (3) enhanced knowledge transfer with respect to both working methods and search tools. The Trilateral Offices agreed to limit the number of applications for the pilot program to 200 applications. The Trilateral Offices are evaluating the program to determine whether it should be expanded to include other types of applications. Prior to June of 2000, the pilot program will be evaluated by the Trilateral Offices to determine whether it should be modified or expanded.

To assist applicants in requesting participation in the concurrent search pilot program, the PTO has created a form for this purpose. The form may be used in the PTO. The form, "Request/Petition for Specialized Concurrent Handling Procedure", permits the applicant to indicate the application numbers and filing dates of the corresponding applications filed in the EPO and the JPO, to indicate when the set of claims for concurrent search will be filed, and to authorize whether the PTO can communicate with the EPO and the JPO concerning any subject matter of the U.S. application and whether the patent examiners may use e-mail to communicate with each other regarding the applications referenced in this form.

II. Method of Collection

By mail, facsimile, and hand carry when the individual desires to participate in the information collection.

III. Data

OMB Number: None.

Form Number: PTO Form No. (form number not yet assigned).

Type of Review: New information collection.

Affected Public: Individuals or households, businesses or other for-profit, not-for-profit institutions, farms, Federal state, local or tribal government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 200 responses per year.

Estimated Time Per Response: It is estimated to take approximately 12 minutes to complete a request/petition for specialized concurrent handling procedure for a particular application.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 40 hours per year.

Estimated Total Annual Cost Burden: \$0 (no capital start-up/maintenance costs expenditures are required). \$7,000 per year is estimated for salary costs associated with respondents.