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NOAA Proposes Guidelines for Fishery Disaster Determinations

NOAA's Fisheries Service is seeking comment on a proposed rule that outlines guidelines and procedures for initiating or responding to requests for fishery disaster determinations.

The proposed rule, which has been in development for more than six months, clarifies and interprets fishery disaster determination provisions and establishes definitions and characteristics of commercial fishery failures. In addition, the rule proposes criteria for determining whether or not a fishery qualifies for a disaster determination.

"This proposed rule would help NOAA's Fisheries Service respond to disaster requests in a fair and consistent manner around the country, and clarify the request process," said Dr. Jim Balsiger, acting NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service.

Fishery resource disaster determinations are made pursuant to provisions of the Magnuson Stevens Act and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act. Disaster assistance may be provided for commercial fishery failures caused by fishery resource disasters.

There is no standing fund to allocate toward determinations that might be made. Congress examines each disaster individually, and decides whether to appropriate funds, and if so, what amount. If Congress decides to appropriate funds, NOAA's Fisheries Service works with the states, interstate fisheries commissions, fishing industry, and others to distribute funds in response to these determinations.

To review the proposed rule go to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2007/otherprovisions.html> . Comments may be submitted for this proposed rule as listed below. All comments received are part of the public record and will be available for review following the end of the comment period.

Electronic: Go to the Federal eRulemaking portal, <http://www.regulations.gov>, and follow instructions for submitting comments.

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NOAA's Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA's Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public. To learn more about NOAA's Fisheries Service, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

On the Web:
NOAA's Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>