

1.0 Purpose. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Policy Directive (PD) 30-127 *Managing the Provision of Environmental Information*, establishes requirements and procedures for public notification of proposed changes to the provision of significant environmental information products and services covered by the policy. The intent is to obtain and consider comments prior to a decision to create, modify or discontinue environmental information products and services. This instruction provides standardized procedures for public notification of proposed changes; procedures to ensure that the public and affected parties are provided an opportunity to submit comments to the proposed changes; requirements that their comments will be taken into consideration prior to a final decision; and notification requirements to inform the public and affected parties once a decision is made to initiate, substantially modify, alter the method of providing, or terminate a significant information product or service covered by the policy.

2.0 Scope. This directive will apply to initiating, substantially modifying, altering the method of provision, or terminating any significant NMFS environmental information product or service meeting the definitions in PD 30-127.

3.0 Procedures for Notification of Proposed Change and Solicitation of Public Comments. When a Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office proposes to initiate, substantially modify, alter the method of provision, or terminate a significant environmental information product or service, the appropriate office or center shall post the proposed change on their website in a manner that is easily understood and accessible to the public. The following information shall be posted:

3.1 Public Comment Period. The proposed change will be posted for public review and comment for at least a period of 30 days.

- a. Name of the information product or service
- b. Type of change proposed (new, modification, termination)
- c. Brief description of the information product or service as follows:
 1. What- What information is provided; what is the current or intended use? What is the rationale for the proposed change?
 2. Why- Why is NMFS providing it? Describe the connection to NMFS mission.
 3. Who- Who is the current or intended audience?
 4. How- How is it presently provided? How will it be provided?
 5. When- When is it available, or when will it be available?
 - d. Point of contact (name, address, email address and phone number)
 - e. Dates of comment period (open and close dates)
 - f. Where to send comments
 - g. Deciding official

3.2 Internal Communication. When a Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office posts proposed changes to significant information products or services on their website for public comment, the office or center shall notify in writing the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and send a copy of the notification to the Office of Constituent Services. The responsible Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office shall determine whether the proposed change is expected to be controversial.

If it is determined to be controversial, the responsible Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office will prepare and submit an issues advisory one week prior to the web posting to the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, with a copy to the OCIO and Office of Constituent Services. The Deputy Assistant Administrator shall notify other NMFS leadership, as appropriate.

- 4.0 Public Comments. All comments on the proposed change to initiate, significantly modify, alter the method of provision, or terminate a significant information product or service will be compiled by the pertinent Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office. These comments may be posted on the website for review by stakeholders and affected parties. Prior to making a decision on the proposed change, all comments will be considered in accordance with NMFSPD 30-127.

- 5.0 Decision. The Director of the pertinent Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office shall be responsible for making a final decision on the proposed change. Following the close of the comment period, the Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office will inform the OCIO and the Office of Constituent Affairs of their decision regarding the proposed change. If the final change is controversial, the pertinent Regional Office, Science Center, or Headquarters Office will seek concurrence from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations for the proposed change prior to public release of the decision and subsequent posting of the decision on their website. An explanation of the decision shall also be provided on the website.

- 6.0 Authorities and Responsibilities. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:
 - 6.1 Proposed Changes to the Provision of Information Services. Any NMFS Regional Office, Science Center or Headquarters Office that proposes changes to the provision of significant information products or services is responsible for following these procedures to ensure there is public notification of proposed changes, opportunity for comment, consideration of comments, and public notification of a final decision. Changes to local and regional information services will be coordinated with the appropriate NMFS Headquarters office and local and regional customers and partners. Changes to national information services should be coordinated with NMFS field offices and national customers and partners.

 - 6.2 Inventory of Environmental Information Products And Services. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) shall maintain a list of agency environmental information products and services covered by the policy and conduct periodic surveys to ensure that all appropriate agency services and products are included.

- 7.0 References. This procedure is supported by the reference listed in Attachment I and the definitions listed in NMFSPD 30-127.

Attachment I

Managing the Provision of Environmental Information. NMFS PD 30-127.