

***NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 30-116
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Administration and Operations

ACCEPTING EMAIL COMMENTS: POLICY DOCUMENT

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OPR: F/CIO

Certified by: F/CIO (L. Tyminski)

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: Corrected a typo and improved language to avoid ambiguity.

Signed _____ 12/03/2008

Larry Tyminski

Date

NMFS Chief Information Officer

Accepting email Comments Policy Document

Definitions

Comment Mailbox - the functional mailbox (as opposed to a personal mailbox) created specifically for accepting public email comments on one or more Federal Register documents. Referred to as "mailbox" in this document.

Spamming - Email that is repetitive, redundant or irrelevant.

FMC - Financial management center (FMC) refers to each Region or Science Center.

Roles

Notice Writer - The person responsible for writing the notice or other Federal Register document, including evaluating and responding to the public comments.

FMC Mail Administrator - The person responsible for creating and managing email accounts for the FMC.

FMC Mail Administrator Backup - The backup person responsible for creating and managing email accounts for the FMC.

NMFS Mail Administrator - The person in the OCIO with overall responsibility for managing NMFS-wide email.

Server Administrator - The person responsible for monitoring and managing the Unix or MS Server on which the email server runs.

Network Administrator - The person responsible for managing the network running the mail server.

Mailbox Owner - The person (usually the Notice Writer) who has full access to the Comment mailbox and is responsible for managing that mailbox.

Policies

- A Comment Mailbox will be identified for each non-rule Federal Register document (FR document) published for public comment.
- Since NOAA implemented the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) on October 1, 2007, all electronically generated comments on NMFS rules are to be submitted through the Regulations.gov portal to the E-Rulemaking application. Consequently, the public is no longer invited to submit email comments on NMFS rules.
- Mailboxes will be established and maintained by the FMC issuing the FR document.
- At the discretion of the FMC, a unique mailbox may be identified for each FR document or a general mailbox may be identified for a group of FR documents.
- When there is a unique mailbox for a FR document, the Notice Writer will usually be the Mailbox Owner. When a general mailbox is used for more than one FR document, the FMC will determine the Mailbox Owner.
- A suitable short name for the mailbox will be used for each non-rule FR document or for when a general mailbox is being used for several FR documents.

- Mailboxes will be open no later than the first date of the comment period and close at, or as soon as practicable after, noon of the first day following the close of the comment period.
- Upon receiving an email comment, we will automatically acknowledge the comment by a return "vacation" message to the commenter stating that the comment has been received by NMFS. The following wording is suggested: "The National Marine Fisheries Service has received your comments and appreciates knowing your views about this action."
- The Notice Writer will move email comments from the comment mailbox to a separate folder on a network drive, as needed, to prevent overloading the mail server.
- Commenters' email addresses will be protected as practicable in accordance with relevant privacy policies and laws.
- The Notice Writer and mailbox owner will monitor the volume of email received and notify the Mail Administrator of any apparent spamming as soon as detected. Mail Administrators will also monitor mail volumes as appropriate.
- Appropriate spamming controls will be invoked if and when the integrity of NMFS' critical operations is threatened.
- All email comments received will be retained, as appropriate, in the administrative record supporting the FR document.