

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

FROM: Robert D. Mecum  
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region

SUBJECT: Categorical Exclusion for Proposed Rule to Revise Regulations Regarding Transfers of Quota, Administrative Measures, and Housekeeping Revisions for the Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off the Coast of Alaska Regulations Regarding Transfers of Quota for the Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off the Coast of Alaska

NAO 216-6, Environmental Review Procedures, requires all proposed actions to be reviewed with respect to environmental consequences on the human environment. This memorandum summarizes the determination that a proposed rule to implement online quota transfers qualifies to be categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

#### Description of the Action(s)

This non-controversial proposed rule would modify the procedure for submittal of quota transfers. NMFS proposes regulations to provide harvesting cooperatives, crab processing quota share holders, and Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups with an option to make intercooperative transfers and crab individual processing quota transfers through an automated, online process.

NMFS would remove the requirement for notarized signatures for all crab leases of individual fishing quota and individual processor quota. Signed, notarized applications would still be required for permanent transfers of crab quota share and processor quota share.

The purposes of this action are to reduce paperwork burdens connected with quota transfers through the development of new online data collection methods. This action would allow cooperatives, processors, and CDQ groups to react quickly to changing business conditions and to realize harvesting efficiencies through online transfers.

#### Effects of the Action(s)

This action would allow cooperatives, crab individual fishing quota (IFQ) holders, crab individual processing quota (IPQ) holders, and CDQ groups to react quickly to changing business conditions and to realize harvesting efficiencies using online transfers. It is anticipated that a small reduction in cost and burden would result.

#### Categorical Exclusion

This action would not result in any changes to the human environment. As defined in Sections 505 and Section 6.03c.3(i) of NAO 216-6, the proposed work is of the Other Categories of Actions Not Having Significant Environmental Impacts exclusion and for which any cumulative effects are negligible. As such, it is categorically excluded from the need to prepare an Environmental Assessment.