



*National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region*  
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## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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### **PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY**

#### **Trawl Rationalization Program - Transfer of Limited Entry Permits**

The Trawl Rationalization Program proposed rule (75 FR 32994, June 10, 2010) that described the initial issuance of permits and endorsements contained a provision which would prohibit the transfer of ownership of a Pacific coast groundfish trawl-endorsed limited entry permit after publication of the final rule. NMFS discussed this issue at a public meeting with the fishing industry in February and at the March 2010 meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (see Agenda Item E.6.b, NMFS Report 2, March 2010, Issue 1). The Council motion stated that, "No limited entry permit with a trawl endorsement associated with an application for a QS permit, or MS/CV or C/P endorsement could be transferred to a different permit owner during the application process." In the proposed rule, NMFS had determined that the application period starts when the final rule publishes, which is expected to be end of August to early September 2010).

Recently, several questions have revealed that there is considerable uncertainty among some owners of trawl-endorsed limited entry permits as to when the "application period" actually starts, thus starting the prohibition on transfer of trawl-endorsed permits. In the view of some permit owners, allowing the owner

of a trawl-endorsed limited entry permit to receive their pre-filled application, which would contain their preliminary qualification from NMFS, would provide a more reliable basis for determining a price for their trawl-endorsed permits.

Given this situation, NMFS has reconsidered the start date for the permit application period. The permit application period will not start on the publication of the final rule. Instead, NMFS will allow a limited period of time after the publication of the final rule that would allow for the transfer of the ownership of trawl-endorsed limited entry permits. Specifically, the application period will start either 30 calendar days after publication of the final rule or the date upon which NMFS receives an application from the permit owner (for each individual permit), whichever occurs first. Once the application period starts, trawl-endorsed limited entry permits cannot be transferred to a different owner until a final decision on the application is made. There is an additional moratorium on the transfer of ownership of any quota share derived from the trawl-endorsed limited entry permit for the first 2 years of the program.

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