



GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Meeting Notice

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will Convene a Meeting of the Ad Hoc Grouper Individual Fishing Quota Advisory Panel (AHGIFQAP)

Tampa, Florida – December 11, 2006 - The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a meeting of the Ad Hoc Grouper Individual Fishing Quota Advisory Panel (AHGIFQAP) to continue discussions regarding the scope and general configuration of an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program for the Gulf of Mexico commercial grouper fishery.

The panel will convene January 9, 2007 at the Quorum Hotel, 700 North Westshore Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33609. The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, January 9, 2007 and conclude no later than 3 p.m. Wednesday, January 10, 2007. To obtain copies of the agenda please call the Council office at 813-348-1630.

The Council has begun deliberation of a Dedicated Access Privilege System (DAP) for the commercial grouper fishery and has appointed an Ad Hoc Grouper IFQ Advisory Panel composed of commercial grouper fishermen and others knowledgeable about DAP systems to assist in the development of such a program.

The AHGIFQAP was formed last year after the Council developed a regulatory amendment to control fishing in the red grouper fishery. That amendment set a commercial trip limit of 6,000 pounds in an attempt to extend the fishing year, which has closed increasingly earlier over the past few years as fishermen have reached the quota before the end of the season. The new limits have lengthened the season some; however, moving to an IFQ system could be a more effective way of managing the fishery and extending the fishing year.

IFQ programs are designed to reduce overcapacity in the commercial fishery, lengthen the fishing season, lower operating costs by giving vessel owners more flexibility, improve market conditions, and increase safety at sea.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the AHGIFQAP for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (M-SFCMA), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the AHGIFQAP will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the M-SFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina Trezza at the Council at least five working days prior to the meeting.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans designed to manage fishery resources in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

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