

## **Excerpts from The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act**

### **SEC. 303A. LIMITED ACCESS PRIVILEGE PROGRAMS. 16 U.S.C. 1853a**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—After the date of enactment of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, a Council may submit, and the Secretary may approve, for a fishery that is managed under a limited access system, a limited access privilege program to harvest fish if the program meets the requirements of this section.

(b) **NO CREATION OF RIGHT, TITLE, OR INTEREST.**—Limited access privilege, quota share, or other limited access system authorization established, implemented, or managed under this Act—

(1) shall be considered a permit for the purposes of sections 307, 308, and 309;

(2) may be revoked, limited, or modified at any time in accordance with this Act, including revocation if the system is found to have jeopardized the sustainability of the stock or the safety of fishermen;

(3) shall not confer any right of compensation to the holder of such limited access privilege, quota share, or other such limited access system authorization if it is revoked, limited, or modified;

(4) shall not create, or be construed to create, any right, title, or interest in or to any fish before the fish is harvested by the holder; and

(5) shall be considered a grant of permission to the holder of the limited access privilege or quota share to engage in activities permitted by such limited access privilege or quota share.

(c) **REQUIREMENTS FOR LIMITED ACCESS PRIVILEGES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Any limited access privilege program to harvest fish submitted by a Council or approved by the Secretary under this section shall—

(A) if established in a fishery that is overfished or subject to a rebuilding plan, assist in its rebuilding;

(B) if established in a fishery that is determined by the Secretary or the Council to have over-capacity, contribute to reducing capacity;

(C) promote—

(i) fishing safety;

(ii) fishery conservation and management; and

(iii) social and economic benefits;

(D) prohibit any person other than a United States citizen, a corporation, partnership, or other entity established under the laws of the United States or any

State, or a permanent resident alien, that meets the eligibility and participation requirements established in the program from acquiring a privilege to harvest fish, including any person that acquires a limited access privilege solely for the purpose of perfecting or realizing on a security interest in such privilege;

(E) require that all fish harvested under a limited access privilege program be processed on vessels of the United States or on United States soil (including any territory of the United States);

(F) specify the goals of the program;

(G) include provisions for the regular monitoring and review by the Council and the Secretary of the operations of the program, including determining progress in meeting the goals of the program and this Act, and any necessary modification of the program to meet those goals, with a formal and detailed review 5 years after the implementation of the program and thereafter to coincide with scheduled Council review of the relevant fishery management plan (but no less frequently than once every 7 years);

(H) include an effective system for enforcement, monitoring, and management of the program, including the use of observers or electronic monitoring systems;

(I) include an appeals process for administrative review of the Secretary's decisions regarding initial allocation of limited access privileges;

(J) provide for the establishment by the Secretary, in consultation with appropriate Federal agencies, for an information collection and review process to provide any additional information needed to determine whether any illegal acts of anti-competition, anti-trust, price collusion, or price fixing have occurred among regional fishery associations or persons receiving limited access privileges under the program; and

(K) provide for the revocation by the Secretary of limited access privileges held by any person found to have violated the antitrust laws of the United States.

(2) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive the requirement of paragraph (1)(E) if the Secretary determines that—

(A) the fishery has historically processed the fish outside of the United States; and

(B) the United States has a seafood safety equivalency agreement with the country where processing will occur.

(3) FISHING COMMUNITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—

(i) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate in a limited access privilege program to harvest fish, a fishing community shall—

(I) be located within the management area of the relevant Council;

(II) meet criteria developed by the relevant Council, approved by the Secretary, and published in the Federal Register;

(III) consist of residents who conduct commercial or recreational fishing, processing, or fishery-dependent support businesses within the Council's management area; and

(IV) develop and submit a community sustainability plan to the Council and the Secretary that demonstrates how the plan will address the social and economic development needs of coastal communities, including those that have not historically had the resources to participate in the fishery, for approval based on criteria developed by the Council that have been approved by the Secretary and published in the Federal Register.

(ii) FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH PLAN.—The Secretary shall deny or revoke limited access privileges granted under this section for any person who fails to comply with the requirements of the community sustainability plan. Any limited access privileges denied or revoked under this section may be reallocated to other eligible members of the fishing community.

(B) PARTICIPATION CRITERIA.—In developing participation criteria for eligible communities under this paragraph, a Council shall consider—

(i) traditional fishing or processing practices in, and dependence on, the fishery;

(ii) the cultural and social framework relevant to the fishery;

(iii) economic barriers to access to fishery;

(iv) the existence and severity of projected economic and social impacts associated with implementation of limited access privilege programs on harvesters, captains, crew, processors, and other businesses substantially dependent upon the fishery in the region or subregion;

(v) the expected effectiveness, operational transparency, and equitability of the community sustainability plan; and

(vi) the potential for improving economic conditions in remote coastal communities lacking resources to participate in harvesting or processing activities in the fishery.

(4) REGIONAL FISHERY ASSOCIATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to participate in a limited access privilege program to harvest fish, a regional fishery association shall—

- (i) be located within the management area of the relevant Council;
- (ii) meet criteria developed by the relevant Council, approved by the Secretary, and published in the Federal Register;
- (iii) be a voluntary association with established by-laws and operating procedures;
- (iv) consist of participants in the fishery who hold quota share that are designated for use in the specific region or subregion covered by the regional fishery association, including commercial or recreational fishing, processing, fishery-dependent support businesses, or fishing communities;
- (v) not be eligible to receive an initial allocation of a limited access privilege but may acquire such privileges after the initial allocation, and may hold the annual fishing privileges of any limited access privileges it holds or the annual fishing privileges that its members contribute; and
- (vi) develop and submit a regional fishery association plan to the Council and the Secretary for approval based on criteria developed by the Council that have been approved by the Secretary and published in the Federal Register.

**(B) FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH PLAN.**—The Secretary shall deny or revoke limited access privileges granted under this section to any person participating in a regional fishery association who fails to comply with the requirements of the regional fishery association plan.

**(C) PARTICIPATION CRITERIA.**—In developing participation criteria for eligible regional fishery associations under this paragraph, a Council shall consider—

- (i) traditional fishing or processing practices in, and dependence on, the fishery;
- (ii) the cultural and social framework relevant to the fishery;
- (iii) economic barriers to access to fishery;
- (iv) the existence and severity of projected economic and social impacts associated with implementation of limited access privilege programs on harvesters, captains, crew, processors, and other businesses substantially dependent upon the fishery in the region or subregion;
- (v) the administrative and fiduciary soundness of the association; and
- (vi) the expected effectiveness, operational transparency, and equitability of the fishery association plan.

(5) ALLOCATION.—In developing a limited access privilege program to harvest fish a Council or the Secretary shall—

(A) establish procedures to ensure fair and equitable initial allocations, including consideration of—

(i) current and historical harvests;

(ii) employment in the harvesting and processing sectors;

(iii) investments in, and dependence upon, the fishery; and

(iv) the current and historical participation of fishing communities;

(B) consider the basic cultural and social framework of the fishery, especially through—

(i) the development of policies to promote the sustained participation of small owner-operated fishing vessels and fishing communities that depend on the fisheries, including regional or port-specific landing or delivery requirements; and

(ii) procedures to address concerns over excessive geographic or other consolidation in the harvesting or processing sectors of the fishery;

(C) include measures to assist, when necessary and appropriate, entry-level and small vessel owner-operators, captains, crew, and fishing communities through set-asides of harvesting allocations, including providing privileges, which may include set-asides or allocations of harvesting privileges, or economic assistance in the purchase of limited access privileges;

(D) ensure that limited access privilege holders do not acquire an excessive share of the total limited access privileges in the program by—

(i) establishing a maximum share, expressed as a percentage of the total limited access privileges, that a limited access privilege holder is permitted to hold, acquire, or use; and

(ii) establishing any other limitations or measures necessary to prevent an inequitable concentration of limited access privileges; and

(E) authorize limited access privileges to harvest fish to be held, acquired, used by, or issued under the system to persons who substantially participate in the fishery, including in a specific sector of such fishery, as specified by the Council.

(6) PROGRAM INITIATION.—

(A) LIMITATION.—Except as provided in subparagraph (D), a Council may initiate a fishery management plan or amendment to establish a limited access privilege program to harvest fish on its own initiative or if the Secretary has certified an appropriate petition.

(B) PETITION.—A group of fishermen constituting more than 50 percent of the permit holders, or holding more than 50 percent of the allocation, in the fishery for which a limited access privilege program to harvest fish is sought, may submit a petition to the Secretary requesting that the relevant Council or Councils with authority over the fishery be authorized to initiate the development of the program. Any such petition shall clearly state the fishery to which the limited access privilege program would apply. For multispecies permits in the Gulf of Mexico, only those participants who have substantially fished the species proposed to be included in the limited access program shall be eligible to sign a petition for such a program and shall serve as the basis for determining the percentage described in the first sentence of this subparagraph.

(C) CERTIFICATION BY SECRETARY.—Upon the receipt of any such petition, the Secretary shall review all of the signatures on the petition and, if the Secretary determines that the signatures on the petition represent more than 50 percent of the permit holders, or holders of more than 50 percent of the allocation in the fishery, as described by subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall certify the petition to the appropriate Council or Councils.

(D) NEW ENGLAND AND GULF REFERENDUM.—

(i) Except as provided in clause (iii) for the Gulf of Mexico commercial red snapper fishery, the New England and Gulf Councils may not submit, and the Secretary may not approve or implement, a fishery management plan or amendment that creates an individual fishing quota program, including a Secretarial plan, unless such a system, as ultimately developed, has been approved by more than 2/3 of those voting in a referendum among eligible permit holders, or other persons described in clause (v), with respect to the New England Council, and by a majority of those voting in the referendum among eligible permit holders with respect to the Gulf Council. For multispecies permits in the Gulf of Mexico, only those participants who have substantially fished the species proposed to be included in the individual fishing quota program shall be eligible to vote in such a referendum. If an individual fishing quota program fails to be approved by the requisite number of those voting, it may be revised and submitted for approval in a subsequent referendum.

(ii) The Secretary shall conduct a referendum under this subparagraph, including notifying all persons eligible to participate in the referendum and making available to them information concerning the schedule, procedures, and eligibility requirements for the referendum process and the proposed individual fishing quota program. Within 1 year after the date of enactment of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, the Secretary shall publish guidelines and procedures to determine procedures and voting eligibility requirements for referenda and to conduct such referenda in a fair and equitable manner.

(iii) The provisions of section 407(c) of this Act shall apply in lieu of this subparagraph for an individual fishing quota program for the Gulf of Mexico commercial red snapper fishery.

(iv) Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, (commonly known as the Paperwork Reduction Act) does not apply to the referenda conducted under this subparagraph.

(v) The Secretary shall promulgate criteria for determining whether additional fishery participants are eligible to vote in the New England referendum described in clause (i) in order to ensure that crew members who derive a significant percentage of their total income from the fishery under the proposed program are eligible to vote in the referendum.

(vi) In this subparagraph, the term 'individual fishing quota' does not include a sector allocation.

(7) TRANSFERABILITY.—In establishing a limited access privilege program, a Council shall—

(A) establish a policy and criteria for the transferability of limited access privileges (through sale or lease), that is consistent with the policies adopted by the Council for the fishery under paragraph (5); and

(B) establish, in coordination with the Secretary, a process for monitoring of transfers (including sales and leases) of limited access privileges.

(8) PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SECRETARIAL PLANS.—This subsection also applies to a plan prepared and implemented by the Secretary under section 304(c) or 304(g).

(9) ANTITRUST SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to modify, impair, or supersede the operation of any of the antitrust laws. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the term 'antitrust laws' has the meaning given such term in subsection (a) of the first section of the Clayton Act, except that such term includes section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act to the extent that such section 5 applies to unfair methods of competition.

(d) AUCTION AND OTHER PROGRAMS.—In establishing a limited access privilege program, a Council shall consider, and may provide, if appropriate, an auction system or other program to collect royalties for the initial, or any subsequent, distribution of allocations in a limited access privilege program if—

(1) the system or program is administered in such a way that the resulting distribution of limited access privilege shares meets the program requirements of this section; and

(2) revenues generated through such a royalty program are deposited in the Limited Access System Administration Fund established by section 305(h)(5)(B) and available subject to annual appropriations.

(e) COST RECOVERY.—In establishing a limited access privilege program, a Council

shall—

(1) develop a methodology and the means to identify and assess the management, data collection and analysis, and enforcement programs that are directly related to and in support of the program; and

(2) provide, under section 304(d)(2), for a program of fees paid by limited access privilege holders that will cover the costs of management, data collection and analysis, and enforcement activities.

(f) CHARACTERISTICS.—A limited access privilege established after the date of enactment of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 is a permit issued for a period of not more than 10 years that—

(1) will be renewed before the end of that period, unless it has been revoked, limited, or modified as provided in this subsection;

(2) will be revoked, limited, or modified if the holder is found by the Secretary, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing under section 554 of title 5, United States Code, to have failed to comply with any term of the plan identified in the plan as cause for revocation, limitation, or modification of a permit, which may include conservation requirements established under the plan;

(3) may be revoked, limited, or modified if the holder is found by the Secretary, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing under section 554 of title 5, United States Code, to have committed an act prohibited by section 307 of this Act; and

(4) may be acquired, or reacquired, by participants in the program under a mechanism established by the Council if it has been revoked, limited, or modified under paragraph (2) or (3).

(g) LIMITED ACCESS PRIVILEGE ASSISTED PURCHASE PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A Council may submit, and the Secretary may approve and implement, a program which reserves up to 25 percent of any fees collected from a fishery under section 304(d)(2) to be used, pursuant to section 53706(a)(7) of title 46, United States Code, to issue obligations that aid in financing—

(A) the purchase of limited access privileges in that fishery by fishermen who fish from small vessels; and

(B) the first-time purchase of limited access privileges in that fishery by entry level fishermen.

(2) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—A Council making a submission under paragraph (1) shall recommend criteria, consistent with the provisions of this Act, that a fisherman must meet to qualify for guarantees under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) and the portion of funds to be allocated for guarantees under each subparagraph.

(h) EFFECT ON CERTAIN EXISTING SHARES AND PROGRAMS.—Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management



Reauthorization Act of 2006, shall be construed to require a reallocation or a reevaluation of individual quota shares, processor quota shares, cooperative programs, or other quota programs, including sector allocation in effect before the date of enactment of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006.

(i) TRANSITION RULES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The requirements of this section shall not apply to any quota program, including any individual quota program, cooperative program, or sector allocation for which a Council has taken final action or which has been submitted by a Council to the Secretary, or approved by the Secretary, within 6 months after the date of enactment of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, except that—

(A) the requirements of section 303(d) of this Act in effect on the day before the date of enactment of that Act shall apply to any such program;

(B) the program shall be subject to review under subsection (c)(1)(G) of this section not later than 5 years after the program implementation; and

(C) nothing in this subsection precludes a Council from incorporating criteria contained in this section into any such plans.

(2) PACIFIC GROUND FISH PROPOSALS.—The requirements of this section, other than subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (c)(1) and subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1) of this subsection, shall not apply to any proposal authorized under section 302(f) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 that is submitted within the timeframe prescribed by that section.