



## **Introduction**

The preparation or approval of management actions under the emergency provisions of section 305 (c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) should be limited to extremely urgent, special circumstances where substantial harm to or disruption of the resource, fishery, or community would be caused in the time it would take to follow standard rulemaking procedures. An emergency action may not be based on Administrative inaction to solve a long-recognized problem. In order to approve an emergency rule, the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) must have an administrative record justifying emergency regulatory action and demonstrating its compliance with the national standards. The only legal prerequisite for the use of the Secretary's emergency authority is that an emergency must exist. Congress intended that emergency authority be available to address conservation, biological, economic, social, and health emergencies. In addition, emergency regulations may make direct allocations among user groups, if strong justification and administrative record demonstrates that, absent emergency regulation, substantial harm will occur to one or more segments of the fishing industry. Controversial actions with serious economic effects, except under extraordinary circumstances, should be done through normal notice-and-comment rulemaking.

The process of implementing emergency regulations limits the public participation in rulemaking that Congress intended under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Administrative procedures act. The Councils and Secretary must, whenever possible, afford the full scope of public participation in rulemaking. In addition, an emergency rule may delay the review of non-emergency rules, because the emergency rules take precedence. Emergency actions should not be routine events.

### **Rational for Emergency Action**

1. The Secretary may promulgate emergency regulations to address an emergency if the Secretary finds that an emergency or overfishing exists, without regard to whether a fishery management plan exists for that fishery;
2. The Secretary shall promulgate emergency regulations to address the emergency or overfishing if the Council, by a unanimous vote of the voting members, requests the Secretary to take such action<sup>1</sup>;
3. The Secretary may promulgate emergency regulations to address the emergency or overfishing if the Council, by less than a unanimous vote of its voting members, requests the Secretary to take such action; and
4. The Secretary may promulgate emergency regulations that respond to a public health emergency or an oil spill. Such emergency regulations may remain in effect until the circumstance that created the emergency no longer exist, provided that the public has had an opportunity to comment on the regulation after it has been published, and in the case of a public health emergency, the Secretary of Health and Human Services concurs with the Secretary's action.

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<sup>1</sup> The NOAA Office of General Counsel has defined the phrase "unanimous vote," to mean the unanimous vote of a quorum voting members of the Council only. An abstention has no effect on the unanimity of the quorum vote.

### **Emergency Criteria**

The phrase "an emergency exists involving any fishery" is defined as a situation that:

1. Results from recent, unforeseen events or recently discovered circumstances; and
2. Presents serious conservation or management problems in the fishery; and
3. Can be addressed through emergency regulations for which the immediate benefits outweigh the value of advance notice, public comment, and deliberative consideration of the impacts on participants to the same extent as would be expected under the normal rulemaking process.

### **Emergency Justification**

If the time it would take to complete notice-and-comment rulemaking or complete a fishery management plan or amendment would result in substantial damage or loss to a living marine resource, habitat, fishery, industry participants or communities, or substantial adverse impacts to the public health, emergency action might be justified under one or more of the following situations:

1. Ecological- (A) to prevent overfishing as defined in a Fishery Management Plan (FMP), or as defined by the Secretary in the absence of an FMP, or (B) to prevent other serious damage to the fishery resource or habitat; or
2. Economic- to prevent significant direct economic loss or preserve a significant economic opportunity that otherwise might be foregone; or
3. Social- to prevent significant community impacts or conflict between user groups; or
4. Public Health- to prevent significant adverse effects to health of participants in a fishery or to the consumers of seafood products.

**THEFT RATES OF MODEL YEAR 1995 PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES STOLEN IN CALENDAR YEAR 1995—Continued**

Manufacturer	Make/model (line)	Thefts 1995	Production (mfg's) 1995	1995 (per 1,000 vehicles produced) theft rate
205 ROLLS-ROYCE .....	SIL SPIRIT/SPURMULS .....	0	132	0.0000
206 ROLLS-ROYCE .....	TURBO R .....	0	19	0.0000
207 VOLKSWAGEN .....	EUROVAN .....	0	1,814	0.0000
208 VOLVO .....	LIMOUSINE .....	0	6	0.0000

Issued on: August 18, 1997.  
 L. Robert Shelton,  
 Associate Administrator for Safety  
 Performance Standards.  
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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
 Administration**

**50 CFR Chapter VI**  
 [Docket No. 970728184-7184-01; I.D.  
 060997C]

**Policy Guidelines for the Use of  
 Emergency Rules**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries  
 Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and  
 Atmospheric Administration (NOAA),  
 Commerce.

**ACTION:** Policy guidelines for the use of  
 emergency rules.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is issuing revised  
 guidelines for the Regional Fishery  
 Management Councils (Councils) in  
 determining whether the use of an  
 emergency rule is justified under the  
 authority of the Magnuson-Stevens  
 Fishery Conservation and Management  
 Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). The  
 guidelines were also developed to  
 provide the NMFS Regional  
 Administrators guidance in the  
 development and approval of  
 regulations to address events or  
 problems that require immediate action.  
 These revisions make the guidelines  
 consistent with the requirements of  
 section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens  
 Act, as amended by the Sustainable  
 Fisheries Act.

**DATES:** Effective August 21, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
 Paula N. Evans, NMFS, 301/713-2341.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

On February 5, 1992, NMFS issued  
 policy guidelines for the use of  
 emergency rules that were published in

the **Federal Register** on January 6, 1992  
 (57 FR 375). These guidelines were  
 consistent with the requirements of  
 section 305(c) of the Magnuson Fishery  
 Conservation and Management Act. On  
 October 11, 1996, President Clinton  
 signed into law the Sustainable  
 Fisheries Act (Public Law 104-297),  
 which made numerous amendments to  
 the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The  
 amendments significantly changed the  
 process under which fishery  
 management plans (FMPs), FMP  
 amendments, and most regulations are  
 reviewed and implemented. Because of  
 these changes, NMFS is revising the  
 policy guidelines for the preparation  
 and approval of emergency regulations.  
 Another change to section 305(c),  
 concerning interim measures to reduce  
 overfishing, will be addressed in  
 revisions to the national standards  
 guidelines.

**Rationale for Emergency Action**

Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-  
 Stevens Act provides for taking  
 emergency action with regard to any  
 fishery, but does not define the  
 circumstances that would justify such  
 emergency action. Section 305(c)  
 provides that:

1. The Secretary of Commerce  
 (Secretary) may promulgate emergency  
 regulations to address an emergency if  
 the Secretary finds that an emergency  
 exists, without regard to whether a  
 fishery management plan exists for that  
 fishery;
2. The Secretary shall promulgate  
 emergency regulations to address the  
 emergency if the Council, by a  
 unanimous vote of the voting members,  
 requests the Secretary to take such  
 action;
3. The Secretary may promulgate  
 emergency regulations to address the  
 emergency if the Council, by less than  
 a unanimous vote of its voting members,  
 requests the Secretary to take such  
 action; and
4. The Secretary may promulgate  
 emergency regulations that respond to a  
 public health emergency or an oil spill.  
 Such emergency regulations may remain  
 in effect until the circumstances that

created the emergency no longer exist,  
 provided that the public has had an  
 opportunity to comment on the  
 regulation after it has been published,  
 and in the case of a public health  
 emergency, the Secretary of Health and  
 Human Services concurs with the  
 Secretary's action.

**Policy**

The NOAA Office of General Counsel  
 has defined the phrase "unanimous  
 vote," in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, to  
 mean the unanimous vote of a quorum  
 of the voting members of the Council  
 only. An abstention has no effect on the  
 unanimity of the quorum vote. The only  
 legal prerequisite for use of the  
 Secretary's emergency authority is that  
 an emergency must exist. Congress  
 intended that emergency authority be  
 available to address conservation,  
 biological, economic, social, and health  
 emergencies. In addition, emergency  
 regulations may make direct allocations  
 among user groups, if strong  
 justification and the administrative  
 record demonstrate that, absent  
 emergency regulations, substantial harm  
 will occur to one or more segments of  
 the fishing industry. Controversial  
 actions with serious economic effects,  
 except under extraordinary  
 circumstances, should be done through  
 normal notice-and-comment  
 rulemaking.

The preparation or approval of  
 management actions under the  
 emergency provisions of section 305(c)  
 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act should be  
 limited to extremely urgent, special  
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 to or disruption of the resource, fishery,  
 or community would be caused in the  
 time it would take to follow standard  
 rulemaking procedures. An emergency  
 action may not be based on  
 administrative inaction to solve a long-  
 recognized problem. In order to approve  
 an emergency rule, the Secretary must  
 have an administrative record justifying  
 emergency regulatory action and  
 demonstrating its compliance with the  
 national standards. In addition, the  
 preamble to the emergency rule should  
 indicate what measures could be taken

or what alternative measures will be considered to effect a permanent solution to the problem addressed by the emergency rule.

The process of implementing emergency regulations limits substantially the public participation in rulemaking that Congress intended under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Administrative Procedure Act. The Councils and the Secretary must, whenever possible, afford the full scope of public participation in rulemaking. In addition, an emergency rule may delay the review of non-emergency rules, because the emergency rule takes precedence. Clearly, an emergency action should not be a routine event.

#### Guidelines

NMFS provides the following guidelines for the Councils to use in determining whether an emergency exists:

#### Emergency Criteria

For the purpose of section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the phrase "an emergency exists involving any fishery" is defined as a situation that:

- (1) Results from recent, unforeseen events or recently discovered circumstances; and
- (2) Presents serious conservation or management problems in the fishery; and
- (3) Can be addressed through emergency regulations for which the immediate benefits outweigh the value of advance notice, public comment, and deliberative consideration of the impacts on participants to the same extent as would be expected under the normal rulemaking process.

#### Emergency Justification

If the time it would take to complete notice-and-comment rulemaking would result in substantial damage or loss to a living marine resource, habitat, fishery, industry participants or communities, or substantial adverse effect to the public health, emergency action might be justified under one or more of the following situations:

- (1) Ecological—(A) to prevent overfishing as defined in an FMP, or as defined by the Secretary in the absence of an FMP, or (B) to prevent other serious damage to the fishery resource or habitat; or
- (2) Economic—to prevent significant direct economic loss or to preserve a significant economic opportunity that otherwise might be foregone; or
- (3) Social—to prevent significant community impacts or conflict between user groups; or

(4) Public health—to prevent significant adverse effects to health of participants in a fishery or to the consumers of seafood products.

Dated: August 14, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,  
Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.  
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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 285

[Docket No. 970702161-7197-02; I.D. 041097C]

RIN 0648-AJ93

#### Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries; Import Restrictions

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS amends the regulations governing the Atlantic highly migratory species fisheries to prohibit importation of Atlantic bluefin tuna (ABT) and its products in any form harvested by vessels of Panama, Honduras, and Belize. The amendments are necessary to implement International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) recommendations designed to help achieve the conservation and management objectives for ABT fisheries.

**DATES:** Effective August 20, 1997. Restrictions on Honduras and Belize are applicable August 20, 1997; restrictions on Panama are applicable January 1, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the supporting documentation are available from Rebecca Lent, Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, Office of Sustainable Fisheries (F/SF1), NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Chris Rogers or Jill Stevenson, 301-713-2347.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Atlantic tuna fisheries are managed under the authority of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA). Section 971d(c)(1) of the ATCA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) to issue regulations as may be necessary to carry out the recommendations of the

ICCAT. The authority to issue regulations has been delegated from the Secretary to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA).

Background information about the need to implement trade restrictions and the related ICCAT recommendation was provided in the preamble to the proposed rule (62 FR 38246, July 17, 1997) and is not repeated here. These regulatory changes will further NMFS' management objectives for the Atlantic tuna fisheries.

#### Proposed Import Restrictions

In order to conserve and manage North Atlantic bluefin tuna, ICCAT adopted two recommendations at its 1996 meeting requiring its Contracting Parties to take the appropriate measures to prohibit the import of ABT and its products in any form from Belize, Honduras, and Panama. The first recommendation was that its Contracting Parties take appropriate steps to prohibit the import of ABT and its products in any form harvested by vessels of Belize and Honduras as soon as possible following the entry into force of the ICCAT recommendation. Accordingly, the prohibition with respect to these countries is effective August 20, 1997. The second recommendation was that the Contracting Parties take appropriate steps to prohibit such imports harvested by vessels of Panama effective January 1, 1998. This would allow Panama an opportunity to present documentary evidence to ICCAT, at its 1997 meeting or before, that Panama has brought its fishing practices for ABT into consistency with ICCAT conservation and management measures. Accordingly, the prohibition with respect to Panama will become effective January 1, 1998.

Under current regulations, all ABT shipments imported into the United States are required to be accompanied by a Bluefin Statistical Document (BSD). Under this final rule, United States Customs officials, using the BSD, will deny entry into the customs territory of the United States of shipments of ABT harvested by vessels of Panama, Honduras, and Belize and exported after the effective dates of the trade restrictions. Entry will not be denied for any shipment in transit prior to the effective date of trade restrictions.

Upon determination by ICCAT that Panama, Honduras, and/or Belize has brought its fishing practices into consistency with ICCAT conservation and management measures, NMFS will publish a final rule in the Federal Register that will remove import restrictions for the relevant party. In