FTZ Act and the Board’s regulations, including Section 400.14.


Andrew McGilvray,
Executive Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2016–04715 Filed 3–2–16; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3510–DS–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
International Trade Administration
[81 FR 3105, 3108; 3111, 3112, 3115, 3116

Certain Uncoated Paper From
Brazil, Indonesia, the People’s Republic of China, and
Portugal: Amended Final Affirmative
Antidumping Determinations for Brazil
and Indonesia and Antidumping Duty
Orders

AGENCY: Enforcement and Compliance, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

SUMMARY: Based on affirmative final determinations by the Department of Commerce (the Department) and the International Trade Commission (the ITC), the Department is issuing antidumping duty orders on certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and Portugal. Also, as explained in this notice, the Department is amending its final affirmative determinations with respect to Brazil and Indonesia.

DATES: Effective Date: March 3, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eve
Wang at (202) 482–6231 (Australia), Julia
Hancock at (202) 482–1394 (Brazil), Blaine Willse at (202) 482–6345 (Indonesia), Stephanie Moro at (202) 482–3692 (PRC), or Kabir Archuleta at (202) 482–2593 (Portugal), AD/CVD

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In accordance with sections 735(d) and 777(i)(1) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (the Act), and 19 CFR 351.210(c), on January 20, 2016, the Department published its affirmative final determinations in the less-than-
fair-value (LTFV) investigations of certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal. 1 On February 22, 2016, the ITC notified the Department of its affirmative determinations that an industry in the United States is materially injured within the meaning of section 735(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act, by reason of the LTFV imports of certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal and its determination that critical circumstances do not exist with respect to imports of subject merchandise from Australia that are subject to the Department’s affirmative critical circumstances finding. 2

Scope of the Orders

The scope of these orders includes uncoated paper in sheet form; weighing at least 40 grams per square meter but not more than 150 grams per square meter; that either is a white paper with a GE brightness level 3 of 85 or higher or is a colored paper; whether or not surface-decorated, printed (except as described below), embossed, perforated, or punched; irrespective of the smoothness of the surface; and irrespective of dimensions (Certain Uncoated Paper).

Certain Uncoated Paper includes (a) uncoated free sheet paper that meets this scope definition; and (c) any other uncoated paper that meets this scope definition regardless of the type of pulp used to produce the paper.

Specifically excluded from the scope are (1) paper printed with final content of printed text or graphics and (2) lined paper products, typically school supplies, composed of paper that incorporates straight horizontal and/or vertical lines that would make the paper unsuitable for copying or printing purposes. For purposes of this scope definition, paper shall be considered “printed with final content” where at least one side of the sheet has printed text and/or graphics that cover at least five percent of the surface area of the entire sheet.

Imports of the subject merchandise are provided for under Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) categories 4802.62.1000, 4802.62.2000, 4802.62.3000, 4802.62.4000, 4802.62.5000, 4802.62.6000, 4802.62.7000, 4802.62.8000, 4802.62.9000, 4811.00.0000, 4811.00.1000, 4811.00.2000, 4811.00.3000, 4811.00.4000, 4811.00.5000, 4811.00.6000, and 4811.00.7000. While HTSUS subheadings are provided for convenience and customs purposes, the written description of the scope of the orders is dispositive.

Amendment to Final Determinations

A ministerial error is defined as an error in addition, subtraction, or other arithmetic function, clerical error resulting from inaccurate copying, duplication, or the like, and any other similar type of unintentional error which the Secretary considers ministerial. 4

Brazil Amended Final Determination

Pursuant to section 735(e) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.224 (a)(1), the Department is amending the Brazil Final to reflect the correction of a ministerial error it made in the final margin assigned to one of the respondents. In addition, because the Department calculated the “all-others” rate based on a weighted-average of the respondents’ margins using publicly-ranged quantities for their sales of subject merchandise, we have revised the all-others rate. 5


\(^3\) One of the key measurements of any grade of paper is brightness. Generally speaking, the brighter the paper, the better the contrast between the paper and the ink. Brightness is measured using a GE Reflectance Scale, which measures the reflection of light off a grade of paper. One is the lowest reflectance, or what would be given to a totally black paper. Ten is the highest reflectance, or what would be given to a totally white paper. One hundred is the brightest measured grade. Reflectance is measured using a GE Reflectometer, which incorporates straight horizontal and/or vertical lines that would make the paper unsuitable for copying or printing purposes. For purposes of this scope definition, paper shall be considered “printed with final content” where at least one side of the sheet has printed text and/or graphics that cover at least five percent of the surface area of the entire sheet.

\(^4\) See section 735(e) of the Act.

\(^5\) See the “Estimated Weighted-Average Dumping Margins” section below.
On January 19, 2016, Petitioners submitted a ministerial error allegation claiming that the Department made a ministerial error with regard to one of the respondent’s bank charges, and the SAS programming which implemented the bank charge at issue. The Department reviewed the record and agrees that we made ministerial errors within the meaning of Section 735(e) and 19 CFR 351.224(f). Specifically, the Department made an unintentional error with regard to one of the respondent’s bank charges and SAS programming which implemented the bank charge at issue. We have corrected these errors in this notice.

Indonesia Amended Final Determination

Pursuant to section 735(e) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.224(e) and (f), the Department is amending the Indonesia Final to reflect the correction of ministerial errors it made in the final margin assigned to the sole cooperative respondent. In addition, because the Department applied the respondent’s final margin to the “all-others” rate and further, relied on the highest transaction-specific dumping margin as adverse facts available, we have revised the other final rates.6

On January 19, 2016, PT Anugerah Kertas Utama/PT Riau Andalan Kertas/ APRIL Fine Paper Macao Commercial Offshore Limited (collectively, APRIL) submitted timely filed allegations that the Department made ministerial errors in our final determination. On January 21, 2016, Petitioners submitted rebuttal comments on APRIL’s allegations. APRIL alleged the Department made two ministerial errors in its final determination: The exclusion of APRIL’s home market billing adjustments and an inconsistency in the Department’s calculation of APRIL’s difference in merchandise adjustment (DIFMER). The Department reviewed the record and agrees that we made ministerial errors within the meaning of section 735(e) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.224(f). Specifically, the Department made unintentional errors with regard to the exclusion of APRIL’s home market billing adjustments and with regard to the calculation of APRIL’s DIFMER.8 We have corrected these errors in this notice.

Antidumping Duty Orders

As stated above, on February 22, 2016, in accordance with section 735(d) of the Act, the ITC notified the Department of its final determinations in these investigations, in which it found material injury with respect to certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal and its determination that critical circumstances do not exist with respect to imports of subject merchandise from Australia that are subject to the Department’s affirmative critical circumstances finding.9 Therefore, in accordance with section 735(c)(2) of the Act, we are issuing these antidumping duty orders. Because the ITC determined that imports of certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal are materially injuring a U.S. industry, unliquidated entries of such merchandise from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal, entered or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, are subject to the assessment of antidumping duties.

Therefore, in accordance with section 736(a)(1) of the Act, the Department will direct U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to assess, upon further instruction by the Department, antidumping duties equal to the amount by which the normal value of the merchandise exceeds the export price (or constructed export price) of the merchandise, for all relevant entries of certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal. Antidumping duties will be assessed on unliquidated entries of certain uncoated paper from Australia, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after August 26, 2015, and in the case of Brazil, on August 27, 2015, the date of publication of the preliminary determinations,10 but will not include entries occurring after the expiration of the provisional measures period and before publication of the ITC’s final injury determination as further described below.

Suspension of Liquidation

In accordance with section 735(c)(1)(B) of the Act, we will instruct CBP to continue to suspend liquidation on all relevant entries of certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal. These instructions suspending liquidation will remain in effect until further notice.

We will also instruct CBP to require cash deposits equal to the amounts as indicated below. Accordingly, effective on the date of publication of the ITC’s final affirmative injury determinations, CBP will require, at the same time as importers would normally deposit estimated duties on this subject merchandise, a cash deposit equal to the estimated weighted-average dumping margins listed below.11 The relevant all-others and PRC-wide rates apply to all producers or exporters not specifically listed, as appropriate. For the purpose of determining cash deposit rates, the estimated weighted-average dumping margins for imports of subject merchandise from Indonesia and the PRC will be adjusted, as appropriate, for export subsidies found in the final determinations of the companion countervailing duty investigations of this merchandise imported from Indonesia and the PRC.12

Provisional Measures

Section 733(d) of the Act states that instructions issued pursuant to an affirmative preliminary determination may not remain in effect for more than four months, except where exporters representing a significant proportion of exports of the subject merchandise request the Department to extend that four-month period to no more than six months. At the request of exporters that account for a significant proportion of

7 See the “Estimated Weighted-Average Dumping Margin” section below.
9 See ITC Letter.
11 See section 736(a)(3) of the Act.
12 See Indonesia Final, 81 FR 3103; see also, PRC Final, 81 FR, at 3114.
13 We are not adjusting the PRC rates for estimated domestic subsidy pass-through because there is no cost-to-price linkage to a subsidized program and, thus, we have no basis upon which to make such an adjustment in that case.
certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal, we extended the four-month period to six months in each case. In the underlying investigations, the Department published the preliminary determinations on August 26, 2015, and August 27, 2015. Therefore, the extended period, beginning on the date of publication of the preliminary determinations, ended on February 21, 2016, and in the case of Brazil, on February 22, 2016. Furthermore, section 737(b) of the Act states that definitive duties are to begin on the date of publication of the ITC’s final injury determination.

Therefore, in accordance with section 733(d) of the Act and our practice, we will instruct CBP to terminate the suspension of liquidation and to liquidate, without regard to antidumping duties, unliquidated entries of certain uncoated paper from Australia, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption after February 21, 2016, and in the case of Brazil, on February 22, 2016, the dates on which the provisional measures expired, until and through the day preceding the date of publication of the ITC’s final injury determinations in the Federal Register. Suspension of liquidation will resume on the date of publication of the ITC’s final determination in the Federal Register.

Critical Circumstances

With regard to the ITC’s negative critical circumstances determination on imports of subject merchandise from Australia, we will instruct CBP to lift suspension and to refund any cash deposits made to secure the payment of estimated antidumping duties with respect to entries of subject merchandise entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after May 28, 2015 (i.e., 90 days prior to the date of publication of the Australia Prelim), but before August 26, 2015, (i.e., the date of publication of the Australia Prelim).

Estimated Weighted-Average Dumping Margins

The weighted-average antidumping duty margin percentages are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exporter/manufacturer</th>
<th>Weighted-average dumping margin (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Australia Pty. Ltd</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 222.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 138.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Paper do Brasil Ltda. and International Paper Exportadora Ltda.</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 41.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzano Papel e Celulose S.A</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 22.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 27.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indonesia:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Champ Trading Limited</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 17.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indah Kiat Pulp &amp; Paper Tbk/Pabrik Kertas Tjiwi Kimia/PT. Pindo Deli Pulp and Paper Mills (APP/SMG)</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 17.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April Fine Paper Macao Commercial OffShore Limited/PT Anugerah Kertas Utama/PT Riau Andalan Kertas (APRIL)</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>.................................................................................. 2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The cash deposit rates are adjusted to account for the applicable export subsidy rate of 51.75 percent for Great Champ Trading Limited and APP/SMG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exporter</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Weighted-average dumping margin (percent)</th>
<th>Cash deposit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRC:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenpoint Global Trading (Macao Commercial Offshore) Ltd.</td>
<td>Asia Symbol (Guangdong) Paper Co., Ltd.; and Asia Symbol (Shangong) Pulp &amp; Paper Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>84.05</td>
<td>83.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRC-Wide Entity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>149.00</td>
<td>148.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The cash deposit rates are adjusted to account for the applicable export subsidy rate of 0.13 percent for Asia Symbol and the PRC-Wide Entity.

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14 See Australia Prelim, Brazil Prelim, Indonesia Prelim, PRC Prelim, and Portugal Prelim.
15 The Department determined that International Paper do Brasil Ltda. and International Paper Exportadora Ltda. constituted a single entity. See Brazil Final, 81 FR, at 3116.
This notice constitutes the antidumping duty orders with respect to certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, the PRC, and Portugal pursuant to section 736(a) of the Act. Interested parties can find a list of antidumping duty orders currently in effect at http://enforcement.trade.gov/stats/iastats1.html.

These orders are published in accordance with section 736(a) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.211(b).


Paul Piquado,
Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Compliance.


DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
International Trade Administration
[A–570–900]
Diamond Sawblades and Parts Thereof From the People’s Republic of China: Initiation and Preliminary Results of Changed Circumstances Review

AGENCY: Enforcement and Compliance, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 751(b) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (the Act), and 19 CFR 351.216 and 19 CFR 351.221(c)(3), the Department of Commerce (the Department) is initiating a changed circumstances review of the antidumping duty order on diamond sawblades and parts thereof (diamond sawblades) from the People’s Republic of China (the PRC) with respect to Wuhan Wanbang Laser Diamond Tools Co., Ltd., is the successor-in-interest to Wuhan Wanbang Laser Diamond Tools Co. for purposes of determining antidumping duty liability. We invite interested parties to comment on these preliminary results.


2 See Wuhan Wanbang Laser Diamond Tools Co., Ltd.’s request for a changed circumstances review dated December 22, 2015 (review request).
extension request will be considered untimely if it is filed after 10:00 a.m. on the due date. Examples include, but are not limited to: (1) Case and rebuttal briefs, filed pursuant to 19 CFR 351.309; (2) factual information to value factors under 19 CFR 351.408(c), or to measure the adequacy of remuneration under 19 CFR 351.511(a)(2); filed pursuant to 19 CFR 351.301(c)(3) and rebuttal, clarification and correction filed pursuant to 19 CFR 351.301(c)(3)(iv); (3) comments concerning the selection of a surrogate country and surrogate values and rebuttal; (4) comments concerning U.S. Customs and Border Protection data; and (5) quantity and value questionnaires. Under certain circumstances, the Department may elect to specify a different time limit by which extension requests must be considered untimely for submissions which are due from multiple parties simultaneously. In such a case, the Department will inform parties in the letter or memorandum setting forth the deadline (including a specified time) by which extension requests must be filed to be considered timely. This modification also requires that an extension request must be made in a separate, stand-alone submission, and clarifies the circumstances under which the Department will grant untimely-filed requests for the extension of time limits. These modifications are effective for all segments initiated on or after October 21, 2013. Please review the final rule, available at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-09-20/html/2013-22853.htm, prior to submitting factual information in these segments.

These initiatives and this notice are in accordance with section 751(a) of the Act (19 U.S.C. 1675(a)) and 19 CFR 351.221(c)(1)(i).


Gary Taverman,
Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Operations.

[FR Doc. 2016–04702 Filed 3–2–16; 8:45 am]
merchandise from Indonesia and the PRC.8

Scope of the Orders

The merchandise subject to these orders includes uncoated paper in sheet form; weighing at least 40 grams per square meter but not more than 150 grams per square meter; that either is a white paper with a GE brightness level9 of 85 or higher or is a colored paper; whether or not surface-decorated, printed (except as described below), embossed, perforated, or punched; irrespective of the smoothness of the surface; and irrespective of dimensions (Certain Uncoated Paper).

Certain Uncoated Paper includes (a) uncoated free sheet paper that meets this scope definition; (b) uncoated ground wood paper produced from bleached chemi-thermo-mechanical pulp (BCTMP) that meets this scope definition; and (c) any other uncoated paper that meets this scope definition regardless of the type of pulp used to produce the paper.

Specifically excluded from the scope of these orders are (1) paper printed with final content of printed text or graphics and (2) lined paper products, typically school supplies, composed of paper that incorporates straight horizontal and/or vertical lines that would make the paper unsuitable for copying or printing purposes. For purposes of this scope definition, paper shall be considered “printed with final content” where at least one side of the sheet has printed text and/or graphics that cover at least five percent of the surface area of the entire sheet.

Imports of the subject merchandise are provided for under Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) categories 4802.56.1000, 4802.56.2000, 4802.56.3000, 4802.56.4000, 4802.56.6000, 4802.56.7020, 4802.56.7040, 4802.57.1000, 4802.57.2000, 4802.57.3000, and 4802.57.4000. Some imports of subject merchandise may also be classified under 4802.62.1000, 4802.62.2000, 4802.62.3000, 4802.62.5000, 4802.62.6020, 4802.62.6040, 4802.69.1000, 4802.69.2000, 4802.69.3000, 4811.90.8050 and 4811.90.9080. While HTSUS subheadings are provided for convenience and customs purposes, the written description of the scope is dispositive.

Amendment to the Indonesia CVD Final Determination

As discussed above, after analyzing the comments received, we determined, in accordance with section 705(e) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.224(e), that we made ministerial errors in certain calculations for the Indonesia Final Determination with respect to the APRIL companies. This amended final CVD determination corrects these errors and revises the ad valorem subsidy rate for the APRIL companies to 21.21 percent, Great Champ to 103.99 percent, IK/TK/PD to 109.14 percent, and All-Others to 21.21 percent.10

Countervailing Duty Orders

In accordance with sections 705(b)(1)(i) and 705(d) of the Act, the ITC notified the Department of its final determinations that the industry in the United States producing certain uncoated paper is materially injured by reason of subsidized imports of certain uncoated paper from Indonesia and the PRC. Therefore, in accordance with section 705(c)(2) of the Act, we are publishing these CVD orders.

As a result of the ITC’s final determinations, in accordance with section 706(a) of the Act, the Department will direct U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to assess, upon further instruction by the Department, CVDs on unliquidated entries of certain uncoated paper entered, or withdrawn from warehouse, for consumption on or after June 29, 2015, the date on which the Department published its preliminary CVD determinations in the Federal Register,11 and before October 27, 2015, the date on which the Department instructed CBP to discontinue the suspension of liquidation in accordance with section 703(d) of the Act. Section 703(d) of the Act states that the suspension of liquidation pursuant to a preliminary determination may not remain in effect for more than four months. Therefore, entries of certain uncoated paper made on or after October 27, 2015, and prior to the date of publication of the ITC’s final determinations in the Federal Register are not liable for the assessment of CVDs due to the Department’s discontinuation, effective October 27, 2015, of the suspension of liquidation.

Suspension of Liquidation

In accordance with section 706 of the Act, the Department will direct CBP to reinstitute the suspension of liquidation of certain uncoated paper from Indonesia and the PRC, effective the date of publication of the ITC’s notice of final determinations in the Federal Register, and to assess, upon further advice by the Department pursuant to section 706(a)(1) of the Act, CVDs for each entry of the subject merchandise in an amount based on the net countervailable subsidy rates for the subject merchandise. On or after the date of publication of the ITC’s final injury determinations in the Federal Register, CBP must require, at the same time as importers would normally deposit estimated duties on this merchandise, a cash deposit equal to the rates noted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Amended subsidy rate (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Champ Trading Limited</td>
<td>103.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8 See Letter to Christian Marsh, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Enforcement and Compliance, from Meredith Broadbent, Chairman of the U.S. International Trade Commission, regarding certain uncoated paper from Australia, Brazil, China, Indonesia, and Portugal (February 22, 2016). See also Certain Uncoated Paper from Australia, Brazil, China, Indonesia, and Portugal, USITC Investigation Nos. 701–TA–528 & 529 and 731–TA–1264–1268 (Final), USITC Publication 4592 [February 2016].

9 One of the key measurements of any grade of paper is brightness. Generally speaking, the brighter the paper the better the contrast between the paper and the ink. Brightness is measured using a GE Reflectance Scale, which measures the reflection of light off a grade of paper. One is the lowest reflection, or what would be given to a totally black grade, and 100 is the brightest measured grade. “Colored paper” as used in this scope definition means a paper with a hue other than white that reflects one of the primary colors of magenta, yellow, and cyan (red, yellow, and blue) or a combination of such primary colors.

10 See Ministerial Error Decision Memorandum at 3.

This notice constitutes the CVD orders with respect to certain uncoated paper from Indonesia and the PRC, pursuant to section 706(a) of the Act. Interested parties may contact the Department’s Central Records Unit, Room B0024 of the main Commerce Building, for a copy of an updated list of CVD orders currently in effect.

These orders are issued and published in accordance with section 706(a) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.211(b).


Paul Piquado,
Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Compliance.

[FR Doc. 2016–04717 Filed 3–2–16; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3510–DS–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE456

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS); request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) announce their intent to prepare an EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 to analyze the impacts on the human (biological, physical, social, and economic) environment of gear changes in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery’s Trawl Catch Share Program, also called the Trawl Rationalization Program. This notice also requests written comment.

DATES: Public scoping will be conducted through this notice. Comments must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on April 4, 2016 (see SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION).

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues and alternatives by any of the following methods:
• Email: groundfish.gearEIS@noaa.gov.
• Mail: Submit written comments to William W. Stelle, Jr., Regional Administrator, West Coast Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Seattle, WA 98115–0070; Attn: Jamie Goen.

Instructions: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jamie Goen, NMFS West Coast Region at 206–526–4656 or jamie.goen@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background for Agency Action

There are more than 90 species managed under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (Groundfish FMP). These groundfish stocks support an array of commercial, recreational, and tribal fishing interests in state and Federal waters off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. In addition, groundfish are harvested incidentally in non-groundfish fisheries; most notably, the trawl fisheries for pink shrimp and California halibut.

The Trawl Catch Share Program was implemented in 2011, changing how the groundfish limited entry trawl fishery is managed. The Trawl Catch Share Program replaced the need for some, but not all, of the trip-limit structure in Federal regulations, and modified regulations for the at-sea fleets. Some of the remaining pre-Trawl Catch Share Program regulations may unnecessarily constrain harvest efficiency and effectiveness under a catch share framework. Pre-Trawl Catch Share Program regulations that managed the fleet as a whole may need to be updated or may no longer be appropriate for managing individuals operating under the incentives provided by catch shares.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to revise groundfish gear regulations for the Trawl Catch Share Program, including trawl gear configuration and gear use. The proposed action may include the following gear regulation changes:
• Loosening or eliminating the minimum mesh size requirement for bottom trawl;
  • Updating the procedure for measuring mesh sizes;
  • Loosening or eliminating cod-end regulations;
  • Loosening or eliminating selective flatfish trawl gear requirements and restrictions (Large and small footrope distinctions would remain);
  • Loosening or eliminating chafing gear regulations;
  • Allowing vessels to carry and/or use multiple gear types on a single trip;
  • Allowing a gear to be fished in multiple management areas on the same trip; and
  • Allowing a vessel’s next gear deployment to start before all fish from the previous deployment have been stowed.

The proposed action may affect fishing in the Trawl Catch Share Program by any or all of the gear types that participate in the fishery, including bottom trawl (small and large footrope),