



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

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## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery** ***PROPOSED RULE***

#### ***Process For Divestiture of Excess Quota Shares (QS) In The Individual Fishing Quota Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery***

#### **Proposed Rule and request for comments**

NMFS has published a proposed rule in the Federal Register (80 FR 53088; September 2, 2015) that would clarify and expand the methods available by which quota share (QS) owners in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota Program would divest themselves of excess QS. The proposed rule is currently available for public review and comment.

Since implementation of the trawl rationalization program, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and NMFS have been working to implement additional regulatory changes to further improve the program and respond to industry needs. QS permit owners who exceed control rules must divest by November 30, 2015, at which time NMFS will revoke their excess. The rulemaking is intended to add another option for divestiture and clarify revocation procedures.

The process for divestiture of excess QS proposed rule includes three distinct proposed actions: (1) allowing QS permit owners who exceed the initial November 2015 aggregate control limit to abandon QS to NMFS, (2) allowing QS permit owners who exceed the aggregate control limit in 2016 and beyond to abandon QS to NMFS, and (3) implementing methods by which NMFS will revoke and redistribute QS from such QS permit owners if a QS permit owner does not take action to meet either an individual species control limit across multiple QS permits or the aggregate control limit.

The rule is available at <http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/2015/80fr53088.pdf>

**Public comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., local time on October 2, 2015.**