



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Susan Gerhart, Susan.Gerhart@noaa.gov
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308

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NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on a Cost Sharing Proposal for the Electronic Logbook Program in the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery *Comment period ends November 6, 2013*

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on a proposal that would establish funding responsibilities for the electronic logbook (ELB) program for the shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf). The proposal published in the *Federal Register* on October 22, 2013 (78 FR 62579).

The proposal would require Gulf shrimp vessel permit holders to pay for the costs of installing and maintaining the ELB units and the cost of data transmission through a wireless provider. NOAA Fisheries would pay for software development, data storage, effort estimation analysis, and archival activities. The preliminary cost estimate for vessel owners is \$60/month for data transmission; however, vessel owners could qualify for group discounts. One-time installation is estimated to cost approximately \$200.

Currently, NOAA Fisheries funds the deployment of ELB units on approximately 500 Gulf shrimp vessels through an outside contractor. The current contract will expire at the end of 2013 and the program will lapse without funding. In addition, units using more modern and efficient technology are now available that would not require NOAA Fisheries to retain a contractor. To continue the program, regardless of the equipment used, industry would need to share in the cost of the program.

If outside funding becomes available, the current program could be continued for multiple years to allow a smoother transition to the new units, and cost sharing may not be needed.

NOAA Fisheries is also soliciting wireless providers that meet the minimum requirements contained in the proposal. If this plan is implemented, NOAA Fisheries will distribute a list of qualified wireless providers to the vessel permit holders in the Gulf shrimp fishery that are selected to participate in the program.

For more information please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the NOAA Fisheries Web site.

Request for Comments

NOAA Fisheries must receive comments on this proposal no later than **November 6, 2013**. We will address all comments specifically directed to the proposal in the final approval announcement. You may obtain electronic copies of the proposal and background material from the NOAA Fisheries Web site http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/shrimp/2013/elb_framework/index.html or the e-Rule Making Portal www.regulation.gov.

How to Submit Comments

You may submit comments on this document, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2013-0127", by one of the following methods:

- Electronic Submission via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2013-0127>, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). You can also attach additional files (up to 10MB) in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.
- Mail written comments to Susan Gerhart, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.
- All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible.

