



## Coast Guard Responds to Fishers Fears of Compliance

HONOLULU (29 October 2012) The US Coast Guard, today in Honolulu, presented the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council with an overview of the new federal safety examination requirements for commercial fishing vessels. USCG Fisheries Enforcement Specialist Charlie Medlicott said the Coast Guard recognizes that these safety requirements may be inappropriate for small vessels fishing in Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The requirements would apply to all vessels owners who commercially fish beyond 3 nautical miles offshore, not only those who own a USCG documented commercial fishing vessel but also those who hold a State of Hawaii commercial marine license, for example.

The Council directed its staff to work with the USCG and affected fishermen in the Western Pacific Region to identify potential exemptions and equivalencies that are locally available and appropriate for the region's fishing activities. The Council also directed its staff to work with the USCG on education and outreach on these issues.

The Council will resume its four-day meeting tomorrow, Oct. 30, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Laniakea YWCA-Fuller Hall, 1040 Richards St., Honolulu.

As part of the Council meeting, a Fishers Forum on tuna issues will be held at the Harbor View Center above Nico's restaurant at Pier 38, Honolulu, between 6 to 9 p.m. tomorrow. The USCG will be one of several agency and organizations with informational booths to answer questions from fishermen and the public. The event will also feature tuna researcher David Itano and author Peter Wilson, who will speak on overfishing of bigeye tuna, possibly increasing the 3-pound minimum size of commercial yellowfin tuna and job opportunities related to tuna fisheries development. The event is free and open to the public.

For more information or the Council meeting agenda, visit [www.wpcouncil.org](http://www.wpcouncil.org) or contact the Council at [info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov](mailto:info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov); phone (808) 522-8220, or fax (808) 522-8226.

The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council was established by Congress to manage fisheries in offshore waters around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and the US Pacific remote island areas. Recommendations made by the Council are transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval.

**Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council:** Appointees by the Secretary of Commerce from nominees selected by American Samoa, CNMI, Guam and Hawaii governors:, Michael Duenas, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (Guam); Richard Seman, education and outreach specialist (CNMI); William Sword, recreational fisherman/civil engineer/manager (American Samoa) (Vice Chair); Edwin Ebisui, attorney (Hawaii); Julie Leialoha, environmentalist (Hawaii); and F. McGrew Rice, charter fisherman (Hawaii). Designated state officials: Arnold Palacios, CNMI Department of Land & Natural Resources (Vice Chair); Mariquita Taitague, Guam Department of Agriculture (Vice Chair); William Aila, Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources (Interim Chair); and Ray Tulafono, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. Designated federal officials: Michael Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; Don Palawski, U.S. Fish and Wildlife; RAdm Charles Ray, U.S. Coast Guard 14th District; and Bill Gibbons-Fly, US Department of State.