



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INTERIOR ANNOUNCED PROPOSED RULES FOR FISHING VESSEL CONSTRUCTION AID

The proposed rules for the payment of direct aid in the construction of fishing vessels have been approved and will appear in the Federal Register in the near future, Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton said today. A 30-day period is provided during which interested persons may submit comments, suggestions and criticisms of the proposals to the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C.

An act to provide a program of assistance in the construction of fishing vessels to correct the inequities of the construction costs between domestic and foreign vessels recently passed Congress, and was signed by the President.

The cost of building such vessels in foreign countries is substantially less than it is in the United States but Federal law prevents United States fishermen from taking advantage of the less expensive foreign construction. The new aid program applies only to fishing vessels which are part of a fishery being injured or threatened by increased imports. The payments cannot exceed one-third of the construction cost. There is an annual authorization of \$2,500,000, but no funds have yet been appropriated.

Under the law an applicant must show that he possesses the necessary ability, experience and resources to operate and maintain the vessel. He must also show that the vessel will aid in the development of the fisheries of the United States.

The vessel must be of United States registry, land all of its catches in ports of the United States except under "force majeure", and employ as its crew only American citizens or aliens legally domiciled in the United States. It must be suitable for speedy and economical conversion to a vessel capable of aiding in national defense or other national emergency. It must be constructed in the United States under the supervision of the Maritime Administrator.

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