

on which the proposed TCRs will be completed.

(c) *Findings.* Before issuing or transferring a commercial recovery permit, the Administrator must make written findings in accordance with the requirements of § 971.403 through § 971.408. These findings will be made after considering all information submitted with respect to the application and proposed issuance or transfer. The Administrator will make a final determination of issuance or transfer of a permit, and will publish a final EIS on that action, within 180 days (or such longer period of time as the Administrator may establish for good cause shown in writing) following the date on which proposed TCRs and the draft EIS are published.

ISSUANCE/TRANSFER, MODIFICATION/
REVISION; SUSPENSION/REVOCAION

§ 971.401 Proposal to issue or transfer and proposed terms, conditions and restrictions.

(a) *Notice and comment.* The Administrator will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER notice of each proposal to issue or transfer, including notice of a draft EIS, and of proposed terms and conditions for, and restrictions on, a commercial recovery permit that will be included with the draft EIS [see § 971.400(b)]. Subject to § 971.802, interested persons will be permitted to examine the materials relevant to such proposals. Interested persons and affected States will have at least 60 days after publication of such notice to submit written comments to the Administrator.

(b) *Hearings.* (1) The Administrator will hold the public hearing(s) required by § 971.212(b) in an appropriate location and may employ such additional methods as he deems appropriate to inform interested persons about each proposal and to invite their comments thereon. A copy of the notice and draft EIS will be provided to the affected State agency. Information provided by NOAA may be used to supplement information provided by the applicant, however it will not affect schedules for State agency review and decisions with respect to consistency determinations as required in 15 CFR part 930, subpart D.

(2) If the Administrator determines there exist one or more specific and material factual issues which require resolution by formal processes, at least one formal hearing, which may be consolidated with a hearing held by another agency, will be held in the District of Columbia metropolitan area in accordance with the provisions of subpart I of this part. The record developed in any such formal hearing will be part of the basis for the Administrator's decisions on issuance or transfer of, and on TCRs for, the permit.

§ 971.402 Consultation and cooperation with Federal and State agencies.

Before issuance or transfer of a commercial recovery permit, the Administrator will conclude any consultations in cooperation with other Federal and State agencies which were initiated pursuant to §§ 971.211 and 971.200(g). These consultations will be held to assure compliance with, as applicable and among other statutes, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended. The Administrator also will consult, before any issuance, transfer, modification or renewal of a permit, with any affected Regional Fishery Management Council established pursuant to section 302 of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1852) if the activities undertaken pursuant to the permit could adversely affect any fishery within the Fishery Conservation Zone (now known as the Exclusive Economic Zone), or any anadromous species or Continental Shelf fishery resource subject to the exclusive management authority of the United States beyond that zone.

§ 971.403 Freedom of the high seas.

(a) Before issuing or transferring a commercial recovery permit, the Administrator must find the recovery proposed in the application will not unreasonably interfere with the exercise of the freedoms of the high seas by other nations, as recognized under general principles of international law.