account. For sablefish, the debited amount would be the round-weight equivalent. For halibut, the debited amount would be the gutted, head-off weight. Round-weight equivalents and gutted, head-off weights were used to determine quota share (QS) amounts for sablefish and halibut, respectively. They also were the weights used to determine annual total allowable catches for those species.

Registered Buyer Permit

Section 676.13(a)(2) would be revised to eliminate the requirement that persons who harvest IFQ species and transfer those IFQ species outside of an IFQ regulatory area must hold a registered buyer permit. In § 676.13(a)(2), the current paragraph (ii) would be removed and paragraph (iii) would be redesignated as paragraph (ii). Section 676.13(a)(2) also would be revised to reflect this change. The current paragraph (ii) would be eliminated to avoid the implication that a registered buyer permit would be needed to harvest and land IFQ species at a shore-based processor located in the State of Alaska, but not located in an IFQ regulatory area.

Also, as a technical change, the last word in the first sentence of § 676.24(j)(4) would be changed from "section" to "part."

Frameworking for Start of Sablefish Fishery

Section 676.23(b) would be revised to allow the Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director), to establish the start of the IFQ sablefish directed fishery. Currently, paragraph (b) has a fixed date for starting the sablefish directed fishery. Under the framework provision, the Regional Director would take into account the opening date of the Pacific halibut season when determining the opening date for the sablefish directed fishing season. Allowing flexibility in starting the sablefish directed fishery would permit its coordination with the start of the halibut fishery, which is determined by the IPHC. Starting the sablefish and halibut seasons concurrently would benefit persons who harvest IFQ species, as well as the fishery resources. Persons who harvest IFQ species would benefit economically, because they would be able to retain both species, rather than having to discard one species because its season was closed. Also, the fisheries under the IFQ Program would benefit because regulatory discards, and resulting mortality caused by those discards, would be reduced.

Classification

An IRFA was prepared for this rule that described and estimated the total number of small entities affected, and analyzed the economic impact on those small entities of the vessel clearance, Canadian port changes, and offloading requirements. It is estimated that more than 20 percent of the 7,200 vessel/ owners involved in the IFQ Program will be affected by these changes, which would increase compliance costs. Based on these analyses, it was determined that this action would, if adopted, have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Copies of the IRFA can be obtained from NMFS (see ADDRESSES).

This proposed rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 676

Fisheries, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: January 6, 1995.

Charles Karnella,

Acting Program Management Officer, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 676 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 676—LIMITED ACCESS MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL FISHERIES IN AND OFF OF ALASKA

1. The authority citation for 50 CFR part 676 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 et seq. and 1801 et seq.

2. Section 676.11 is amended by revising the definitions of "Catcher vessel", "Freezer vessel", and "Trip"; and by adding the definition of "Clearing officer" to read as follows:

§ 676.11 Definitions.

* * * * *

Catcher vessel, as used in this part, means any vessel that is used to catch, take, or harvest fish that are subsequently iced, headed, gutted, bled, or otherwise retained as fresh, unfrozen, fish onboard.

Clearing officer means a NMFS special agent, a NMFS fishery enforcement officer, or a NMFS enforcement aide who performs the function of clearing vessels at one of the primary ports listed in § 676.17(a)(4).

Freezer vessel means any vessel that can be used to process some or all of its catch.

Trip, as used in this part, means the period beginning when a vessel operator

commences harvesting IFQ species and ending when the vessel operator lands any species.

3. Section 676.13 is amended by revising the first sentence of (a)(2) introductory text, paragraphs (f)(1), and (f)(2); by removing paragraph (a)(2)(ii), and by redesignating paragraph (a)(2)(iii); and amending paragraph (a)(2)(i) by adding the word "or" to the end of the phrase to read as follows:

§ 676.13 Permits.

(a) * * *

(2) Any person who receives IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish from person(s) that harvested the fish must possess a registered buyer permit, except under conditions of paragraph (a)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section. * * *

(f) * * * (1) A legible copy of any IFQ permit issued under this section must be carried onboard the vessel used by the permitted person to harvest IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish at all times that such fish are retained onboard. Except as specified in § 676.22(d), an individual who is issued an IFQ card must remain onboard the vessel used to harvest IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish with that card until all such fish are landed, and must present a copy of the IFQ permit and the original IFQ card for inspection on request of any authorized

buyer purchasing IFQ species.
(2) A legible copy of the registered buyer permit must be present at the location of an IFQ landing, and must be made available for inspection on request of any authorized officer or clearing officer.

officer, clearing officer, or registered

4. Section 676.14 is amended by revising paragraphs (a), (b)(1), (b)(2), (e), and (f) to read as follows:

§ 676.14 Recordkeeping and reporting.

(a) Prior notice of IFQ landings. The operator of any vessel that makes an IFQ landing must notify the Alaska Region, NMFS, no later than 6 hours before landing IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish, unless permission to commence an IFQ landing within 6 hours of notification is granted by a clearing officer. Such notification of IFQ landings must be made to the toll-free telephone number specified on the IFQ permit between the hours of 0600 and 2400 Alaska local time. The notification must include the name and location of the registered buyer(s) to whom the IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish will be landed, the estimated weight of the IFQ halibut or IFQ sablefish that will be landed and the