

Statement of Purpose and Need

The purpose of this draft legislation is to implement –

- the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean (North Pacific Fisheries Resources Convention, or NPFRC) done at Tokyo, Japan, on February 24, 2012, and signed by the United States on May 2, 2012; and
- the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources (South Pacific Fishery Resources Convention, or SPFRC) in the South Pacific Ocean that entered into force on August 24, 2012.

The NPFRC and SPFRC are new instruments that will establish long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources, while protecting the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur in the North and South Pacific Ocean.

The NPFRC establishes a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) through which Parties will cooperate to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources in the Convention Area of the North Pacific Ocean while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur. Cooperation under NPFRC will address fisheries resources not covered under pre-existing international fisheries management instruments and will help to prevent significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems on the high seas that may have impacts on fisheries resources in areas subject to U.S. jurisdiction. The United States was a primary participant in the negotiation of the NPFRC and was the first country to sign the NPFRC.

The SPFRC establishes, through the application of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, a regime to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources and, in so doing, to safeguard the marine ecosystems in which these resources occur. It establishes an RFMO that includes areas of the South Pacific outside national jurisdiction, from Australia to South America. The United States was also a primary participant in the negotiation of SPFRC, which entered into force August 24, 2012. SPFRC will address fisheries resources not currently under management by pre-existing agreements, such as bottom fisheries and pelagic fisheries.

On April 22, 2013, President Obama transmitted the NPFRC and SPFRC to the United States Senate, recommending that it give its advice and consent to ratification. On April 3, 2014, the Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification of the NPFRC and the SPFRC.

The United States has worked for many years with other nations to improve the management of fisheries at the international level and to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from the impacts of certain fishing practices on the high seas. The NPFRC and SPFRC will advance U.S. interests

in the effective management of high seas fisheries. Adherence to NPFRC and SPFRC will also help ensure that measures adopted for fisheries on the high seas of the North Pacific and South Pacific Ocean will be compatible with measures adopted by the United States with respect to fisheries in adjacent waters under the fisheries jurisdiction of the United States. In addition, adherence will ensure that future U.S. fishing interests subject to the NPFRC and SPFRC can be factored into allocation decisions.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce is the lead agency for U.S. implementation of the NPFRC and SPFRC.