

§ 4012. Assessments**(a) Authority**

A council shall impose and administer the collection of the assessments that are necessary to pay for all expenses incurred by the council in carrying out its functions under this chapter.

(b) Method of imposition

(1) Assessments shall be imposed on sector participants in the receiving sector or the importing sector, or both, as specified in an approved council charter.

(2) An assessment on sector participants in the receiving sector shall be—

(A) except for an owner of a fish processing vessel, in the form of a percentage of the value of the fish described in accordance with section 4009(b)(3) of this title when purchased by such participants from fish harvesters; and

(B) for an owner of a fish processing vessel, in the form of a percentage of the value of the fish described in accordance with section 4009(b)(3) of this title and harvested by such a vessel that is no less than the value of such fish, if such fish had been purchased by a receiver other than an owner of such a vessel.

(3) An assessment on sector participants in the importing sector shall be in the form of a percentage of the value, as determined for the purposes of the customs laws, of the fish or fish products described in accordance with section 4009(b)(3) of this title when entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, in the customs territory of the United States by such sector participants.

(c) Prohibition on assessment

A council may not impose an assessment on any person that was not eligible to vote in the referendum establishing the council under section 4009(e) of this title by reason of failure to meet the requirements specified under section 4009(b)(6) of this title, unless such person, after the date on which such referendum is held, meets the requirements of section 4009(b)(6) of this title.

(d) Voluntary payments

Any person may make voluntary payments or in-kind contributions to a council for purposes of assisting the council in carrying out its functions.

(e) Deposit of funds

All funds collected or received by a council under this section shall be deposited by the council in an appropriate account in the name of the council specified in its charter. Funds eligible to be collected or received by a council shall be limited to those authorized under this section.

(f) Information

(1) Sector participants shall make available to the Secretary such information and data as is necessary for the effectuation, administration or enforcement of this chapter or any order or regulation issued pursuant to this chapter. Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, any information obtained in carrying out this subsection shall be kept confiden-

tial by all officers and employees of the Department of Commerce, independent accountants and other persons who have access to such information.

(2) If the Secretary or an employee of the United States Government is a party to a suit or administrative action involving an assessment, order, or regulation issued under this chapter, the Secretary may disclose information obtained under paragraph (1) of this subsection to the extent allowed by the judicial or administrative officer presiding over such suit or action.

(3) This subsection shall not prohibit—

(A) the issuance of general or statistical statements based upon reports of a number of persons subject to the provisions of this chapter which do not identify the information furnished by any person; or

(B) the publication by direction of the Secretary of the name of any person violating a requirement relating to an assessment imposed under subsection (a) of this section or to quality standards implemented by the Secretary under section 4010(c) of this title, and a statement of the particular provisions of the requirement violated by such person.

(4) Any individual who is required to keep information confidential under this subsection and who knowingly violates this subsection shall, upon conviction, be—

(A) subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or to imprisonment for not more than one year, or both; and

(B) removed from office if an officer or employee of a council or the Department of Commerce.

(Pub. L. 99-659, title II, §213, Nov. 14, 1986, 100 Stat. 3727.)

§ 4013. Petitions**(a) Filing of petition**

Any person subject to assessment under section 4012 of this title may file a written petition with the Secretary alleging that—

(1) the assessment,

(2) the plan approved under section 4011(a)(1) of this title on which the assessment is based, or

(3) any obligation imposed under the plan,

is not in accordance with law and requesting the Secretary to modify or take other appropriate action regarding the assessment or plan.

(b) Form of petition

Any such petition shall be in writing and filed within the period prescribed by the Secretary. A person who files a petition under this section shall be given an opportunity for a hearing regarding the petition in accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary. After such a hearing, or if no hearing is requested, after consideration of all documentation and other evidence, the Secretary shall make a ruling upon such petition.

(Pub. L. 99-659, title II, §214, Nov. 14, 1986, 100 Stat. 3728.)

§ 4014. Refunds

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, any person who pays an assessment

under this chapter may demand and shall promptly receive from the council a refund of such assessment. A demand for refund must be made in accordance with the procedures, and within such time, as shall be prescribed by the council and approved by the Secretary. Procedures to provide such a refund shall be established before any such assessment may be collected. Such procedures shall allow any person to request a refund for not less than ninety days from such collection, and provide that any such refund shall be made within sixty days after demand for such refund is made.

(Pub. L. 99-659, title II, §215, Nov. 14, 1986, 100 Stat. 3728.)

§ 4015. Termination of a council

(a) Petition for termination

(1) A petition to terminate a council may be filed with the Secretary by no less than three sector participants in any one sector. Any petition filed under this subsection shall be accompanied by a written document explaining the reasons for such petition.

(2) If the Secretary determines that a petition filed under paragraph (1) of this subsection is accompanied by the signatures, or corporate certifications, as the case may be, of no less than three sector participants in a sector referred to in paragraph (1) of this subsection who collectively accounted for, in the twelve-month period immediately preceding the month in which such petition was filed, not less than 20 percent of the value of the fish or fish products described in accordance with section 4009(b)(3) of this title that were handled by that sector during such period, the Secretary, within 90 days after such determination, shall conduct a referendum for termination of the council among all sector participants in that sector.

(3) Not less than 30 days prior to holding a referendum under this subsection, the Secretary shall publish a notice of such referendum, including the document explaining the reasons for the petition filed under paragraph (1) of this subsection and any other relevant information the Secretary considers appropriate.

(4) If the referendum votes which are cast in favor of terminating the council constitute a majority of the sector participants voting and the majority, in the period referred to in paragraph (2) of this subsection, collectively accounted for not less than sixty-six percent of the value of such fish and fish products that were handled during such period by a sector referred to in paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Secretary shall by order terminate the council effective as of a date by which the affairs of the council may be concluded on an orderly basis.

(5) The Secretary initially shall pay all costs of a referendum conducted under this subsection. Prior to conducting such a referendum, the Secretary shall require petitioners to post a bond or other security acceptable to the Secretary in an amount which the Secretary determines to be sufficient to pay any expenses incurred for the conduct of such referendum.

(6)(A) If a referendum conducted under this subsection fails to result in the termination of the council, the Secretary shall immediately re-

cover the amount of the bond posted by petitioners under paragraph (5) of this subsection.

(B) If a referendum conducted under this subsection results in the termination of the council, the Secretary shall recover the expenses incurred for the conduct of the referendum from the account established by the council under section 4012(e) of this title. If the amount remaining in such account is insufficient for the Secretary to recover all expenses incurred for the conduct of the referendum, the Secretary shall recover the balance of such expenses from the petitioners that posted a bond under paragraph (5) of this subsection.

(b) Payment of remaining funds

If a council is terminated under subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary, after recovering all expenses incurred for the conduct of the referendum under subsection (a) of this section, shall take such action as is necessary and practicable to ensure that moneys remaining in the account established by the council under section 4012(e) of this title are paid on a prorated basis to the sector participants from whom those moneys were collected under section 4012 of this title.

(Pub. L. 99-659, title II, §216, Nov. 14, 1986, 100 Stat. 3728.)

§ 4016. Enforcement

(a) Authority

(1) The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction specifically to enforce and to prevent and restrain any person from violating any assessment, order or regulation made or issued under this chapter.

(2)(A) If a council has reason to believe that a person subject to an assessment, order or regulation made or issued under this chapter is violating such assessment, order or regulation, it may refer the matter to the Secretary.

(B) Except as provided in subparagraphs (C) or (D) of this paragraph, any civil action authorized to be brought under this subsection, when referred by a council under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, shall be referred to the Attorney General for appropriate action.

(C) If the Secretary believes that the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this chapter would be adequately served by taking administrative action under subsection (b) of this section or by providing written notice or warning to any person committing a violation of this chapter, the Secretary is not required to refer such violation to the Attorney General.

(D) Whenever a matter has been referred by a council under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and the Secretary or the Attorney General fails within 60 days of such referral to take appropriate action, the council may, upon filing notice with the Secretary or Attorney General, as appropriate, and other interested parties, bring an action in its own name.

(b) Recovery of costs

(1)(A) When a council brings an action under subsection (a)(2) of this section, the council may recover costs of litigation and, where the action is brought to collect an unpaid assessment, interest from the date the amount became due and payable.