

## AMENDMENT 17 - MULTI-YEAR MANAGEMENT

**Situation:** The Council is scheduled to take final action on Amendment 17. This amendment was developed in response to the increasing complexity of the groundfish management process, and designed to accommodate a court decision requiring National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to publish the proposed annual specifications and management measures in the *Federal Register* for public comment before publishing a final rule implementing these specifications and management measures

Alternatives under Amendment 17 would change the process for developing groundfish specifications and management measures so that measures could be established for two years, rather than one year. This would provide more time for the Council and NMFS to work on other critical groundfish issues, such as strategic plan implementation. In addition, the alternative management schedules would provide enough time for NMFS to carry out the court ordered public notice and comment requirement.

The amendment includes five alternate management schedules, with various options for setting specifications and management measures, the number and schedule of Council meetings for developing specifications and measures, fishing year start dates, and schedules for conducting new and updated groundfish stock assessments. It also compares the effects of using one-year optimum yields or two-year optimum yields within a biennial framework.

The Environmental Assessment for Amendment 17 was made available to the public after the September 2002 Council meeting. Notice of availability was provided in the Council newsletter. The document was also posted to the Council website. As of October 15, 2002, no comments were received.

In taking final action on Amendment 17, the Council should consider specifying a preferred alternative and articulating why this alternative is preferred over the other alternatives. Providing adequate time for Council and NMFS staff to develop and analyze management specifications, ensuring science is timely and relevant, and modifying the fishing year start date are issues that will need to be considered in making this determination.

The Council should also consider how it intends to transition to a new management regime, including the number of Council meetings that will be required during 2003 to develop, analyze, and act on multi-year management specifications for 2004 through 2005.

### **Council Action:**

#### **1. Final Adoption of Amendment 17**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Exhibit C.9, Attachment 1, September 2002. **(Please bring this document from the September Council Meeting Briefing Book with you.)**
2. Exhibit G.5, Attachment 1, Transition Alternatives Table.

### **Agenda Order:**

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. NMFS Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Final Adoption of Amendment 17

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Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The purposes of Amendment 17 (optimizing the groundfish management process and providing for adequate public notice and comment) are in line with GFSP goals for the Council process. These goals include: establishing and maintaining a management process that is transparent, participatory, understandable, accessible, consistent, effective, credible, and adaptable; providing a public forum that can respond in a timely way to the needs of the resource and to the communities and individuals who depend on them; and establishing a long-term view with clear, measurable goals and objectives.

PFMC  
10/15/02