

VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM

Situation: The Council approved the formation of an Ad Hoc Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Committee to be comprised of limited entry groundfish representatives from the three West Coast states, the Enforcement Consultants (EC), and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) chair. The Ad Hoc VMS Committee met for the first time at the Council office in Portland, Oregon on October 11, 2002 and drafted a range of alternatives for VMS implementation. The Council identified a preferred alternative at the October 28-November, 2002 meeting and recommended that NMFS, in consultation with the Ad Hoc VMS Committee, prepare a proposed rule for a pilot VMS program for implementation at some point in 2003.

The Ad Hoc VMS Committee reconvened at the Council office in Portland, Oregon on December 18, 2002 to review the Council recommendations, consider the content and language of the NMFS draft proposed rule, and discuss costs, performance, and features of VMS equipment.

A draft proposed rule and a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) are being prepared by NMFS, but have not been completed to the point of being released for public review and comment at the time of the Briefing Book preparation. It had been intended that the open public comment period for the proposed rule would coincide with the April Pacific Council meeting.

Since the draft proposed rule and supporting EA is not available for advance Council review at this time, NMFS will provide a progress update on its preparation status under this agenda.

Regardless of the status of a draft proposed rule and draft EA, a joint session of the GAP and EC on VMS is scheduled for Sunday, April 6, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. to discuss VMS issues in general and the results of the December 18, 2002 Ad Hoc VMS Committee meeting.

Council Action:

1. Consider the next steps in the VMS implementation process

Reference Materials:

1. Draft Summary Meeting Minutes of the Ad Hoc VMS Committee, December 18, 2002 (Exhibit E.6, Attachment 1).

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Consider the Next Steps in the VMS Implementation Process

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03/25/03