

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON U.S. COAST GUARD REPORT ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION AND VESSEL
MONITORING SYSTEMS (AIS AND VMS)

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) listened to the presentation by LCDR Bob Hendrickson on the implementation of AIS. The GAP recognizes that it appears the Department of Homeland Security will be moving forward with the AIS system under the guise of safety, and claim that it will eventually be implemented on every vessel in U.S. waters. The GAP wonders how they intend to improve safety with this system when they cannot, or will not implement a basic operator's license for watercraft. Safety can be achieved through means other than expensive, big brother monitoring systems which will be forced upon sectors which are arguably already over regulated and over policed.

The GAP has serious concerns about the increasing lack of privacy and notes that any privacy between fishers afforded by VMS will be lost with AIS, and that the difference between profit and loss for some fishers will be marginalized when the competition knows when you are fishing, where you are fishing, and where you are heading.

It appears the application of AIS to 65-foot/50-plus-passenger and other categories of vessels receiving an initial deferment is settled. The GAP wishes to see any further oversight by the government be applied to every vessel left at the same time rather than, and it IS, "picking on" the easiest targets.

The GAP continues to request that additional implementation of VMS/AIS be paid for by the Federal government as it is obvious at this Council session that it will not be any easier in the near future for a fisher to pay his bills.

PFMC
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