

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CONSIDERATION OF 2015-2016 AND
BEYOND HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) was briefed by Mr. John DeVore and Dr. Christopher Dahl about this agenda item. The primary decision points at this meeting appear to be: review of the analytical approach and range of alternatives described in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) outline (Agenda Item F.7.a, Attachment 1); revisions to Council Operating Procedure (COP) 9 detailed in Agenda Item F.7.a, Attachment 2; and the proposed schedule in Agenda Item F.7.a, Attachment 3. The GAP appreciates the staff overview of the issues at hand and identification of Council decision points.

As an overarching comment, the GAP strongly reiterates our past recommendation that maintaining the January 1 groundfish fishery start date is critical and that every effort should be made to ensure that the specifications process is completed on time. Moreover, the GAP highlights that the Council is considering other groundfish issues this week that have significant workload, most notably, restructuring groundfish stock complexes. The GAP cautions the Council to be careful in taking on additional, significant workload that could hinder the specifications development process and delay the January 1 start date.

Specific to the Council tasks, the GAP supports the proposed structure of the draft EIS and considers the range of alternatives adequate. The GAP also supports the proposed specifications development schedule and proposed revisions to COP 9 to facilitate that schedule. Finally, the GAP supports exploring development of a long-term approach that uses both the Amendment 24 framework for computing default harvest specifications and the tiered analysis described in the draft EIS outline. The long-term approach should also consider revitalization of the groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation document to inform the tiered analysis. The GAP thinks these latter tools are critical to facilitate timely and flexible management in response to new information or changing conditions in the fishery.