Exhibit C.12.a
Supplemental GAP Report
September 2001

GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
2002 STOCK ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) discussed 2002 stock assessment priorities with NMFS personnel and offers the following comments.

The GAP supports the NMFS plan to complete stock assessments on Pacific whiting, bocaccio rockfish, and canary rockfish. The GAP also supports NMFS efforts to better evaluate survey methodology as survey responsibilities are transferred from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to the Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

However, the GAP is concerned that no effort will be made to update the sablefish and Dover sole stock assessments with new information that will be available from 2001 surveys. The 2001 assessments have preferred models that were reviewed by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel and generally approved. These models could easily be updated with the new survey information and the results could be applied to the 2003 fisheries specifications. The economic effect of reductions in sablefish and Dover sole harvests in 2002 based on the current stock assessments will be devastating. It is unconscionable to continue those reductions if - as appears to be the case - new information allows the Council to provide some relief.

The GAP understands the Scientific and Statistical Committee may have reservations about conducting simple updates without appropriate peer review. As a strong proponent of the STAR Panel process, the GAP appreciates those reservations. However, STAR Panel and Stock Assessment Team (STAT) Team members have also expressed concern over a cumbersome process being used to review models which have already met with scientific approval.

The GAP believes NMFS and the Council should convene another work group early next year to further streamline the STAR process, especially as it applies to updating models which have previously been reviewed. In the meantime, a simple update of the sablefish and Dover sole assessments need to be conducted using 2001 survey data.

PFMC
09/13/01