

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON  
SCOPING FOR DELEGATION OF NEARSHORE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) on the question of delegation of nearshore management authority. Although somewhat hampered by the fact that the voluminous background material on this subject was not received by GAP members until the afternoon prior to the presentation, the GAP, nevertheless, provides the following comments.

While a minority of the GAP believes the Council should adopt some of the conservative management approaches to rockfish embodied in the California plan, the GAP still unanimously opposed delegation of nearshore management authority, and recommends the Council give this issue a low priority in light of the many more crucial issues facing the Council.

The GAP believes the types of authority transfer being contemplated will cause additional confusion to resource users, an added cost, and could actually increase discards. Vessels legally fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off California and either not registered in California or landing in Oregon could be forced to discard species on the delegated list which could otherwise be legally taken.

The GAP notes there is no provision for full participation in California management decisions by non-residents who are affected by the law. In the similar case of deferred management in the Alaskan crab fisheries, there are avenues of non-resident participation and checks and balances to ensure the rights of non-residents are accommodated.

Even residents can be adversely affected by the management process, as they now will be forced to attend California Fish and Game Commission meetings as well as Council meetings to keep abreast of nearshore rockfish science and management. Several GAP members noted that these meetings are often scheduled concurrently.

Questions were also raised as to how science would be coordinated between the Council and California, given that some of these species exist inside and outside California waters and off the shores of more than one state.

Finally, it is unclear to the GAP whether sufficient resources will be available to the CDFG to conduct the necessary level of research, management, and enforcement if nearshore species are transferred. If these fiscal and personnel resources are not available, then there is a question of whether the fish stocks and the users will be better off with transfer of management.

While the GAP is sympathetic to the fact CDFG faces difficult legislative mandates, it is not a problem the Council or resource users should have to address.

PFMC  
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