

EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS (EFPs): UPDATE AND NEW PROPOSALS

Situation: Exempted fishing permits (EFPs) provide a process for testing novel fishing gears and strategies to substantiate methods for prosecuting sustainable and risk-averse fishing opportunities. Anticipating a dramatic restructuring of the West Coast groundfish fishery next year to conform to conservation mandates for overfished species, the Council signaled its intent to make greater use of EFPs. Preliminary discussions revealed potential drawbacks to the concept of EFP proliferation, including impacts to the current NOAA Fisheries Groundfish Observer Program. The Council should take this opportunity to discuss these issues and start a constructive dialogue with NOAA Fisheries and the public on how best to restructure the current EFP program to meet Council and Magnuson-Stevens Act objectives of providing healthy and sustainable fishing opportunities.

This agenda also provides the opportunity for Council, state, and agency representatives to discuss plans and applications for 2003 EFPs. These discussions could serve to refine and coordinate contemplated EFPs prior to final approval at the October Council meeting.

Progress updates from ongoing EFPs may help the Council in their consideration of fishing strategies and opportunities for next year's fishery. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will update the Council with preliminary results from two of their sponsored EFPs. EFPs designed to test trawl strategies for targeting abundant arrowtooth flounder and yellowtail rockfish while minimizing bycatch of overfished species, such as canary rockfish, have been conducted by WDFW personnel and Washington limited entry trawl fishermen. Results from these activities could benefit deliberations for structuring the 2003 trawl fishery to access healthy and abundant target species without impacting overfished shelf and slope rockfish. Other state representatives may discuss their progress towards implementing other approved EFPs, such as the Scottish seine EFP sponsored by the California Department of Fish and Game to test the efficiency of that gear to cleanly target Pacific sanddabs.

Additional EFP applications may be considered at this time if any are submitted for Council consideration.

Council Action:

1. Consideration and discussion of proposals and recommendations to NOAA Fisheries.

Reference Materials:

1. None available at the time of the briefing book mailing.

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Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Agency and Tribal Proposals
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Preliminary Consideration of Proposals and Recommendations to NMFS

John DeVore
State and Agency Representatives

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The GFSP supports bycatch reduction efforts and development of selective fishing techniques. Council-approved EFPs are designed to gather information on methods to selectively harvest abundant species and determine bycatch rates of overfished and other groundfish species of concern. Any additional EFP applications will need to be reviewed for consistency with overall GFSP objectives.

Supplemental Reference Materials

1. Exhibit C.5.b, Supplemental COFG proposal.
2. Exhibit C.5.b, Supplemental WOFW proposal,
3. Exhibit C.5.b, Supplemental OOFW proposal,
4. Exhibit C.5.c, Revised supplemental GMT Report.
5. Exhibit C.5.c. Supplemental GAP Report.