

## INITIAL REFINEMENT OF MANAGEMENT MEASURE ALTERNATIVES FOR 2005-06 FISHERIES

Situation: Management measures adopted during the Council process are designed to implement new and existing rebuilding programs, achieve bycatch reduction mandates, keep total catch within the proposed harvest levels, and achieve optimum benefits to the various user groups and fishing communities.

In the last five years, the Council has implemented a substantial restructuring of the groundfish fishery that includes gear restrictions, seasons, dramatically lower harvest levels consistent with previously-approved rebuilding programs for overfished species, and depth-based restrictions that shift the fishery out of the areas where the most depleted groundfish species reside. The management implications of new groundfish stock assessments and rebuilding analyses, as well as the overharvest of some species in recent years may require consideration of different management measures than implemented in 2004.

The Ad Hoc Allocation Committee (Committee) is scheduled to meet on March 24 and 25 (Exhibit C.2.b, Supplemental Ad Hoc Allocation Committee Report) to begin formulating recommended management and allocation alternatives that are responsive to new assessments and rebuilding analyses. Additionally, the Groundfish Management Team, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and interested public are expected to provide recommendations and alternatives for 2005-2006 management.

The Council should develop a range of specific management options at this meeting to help focus public attention on the extent of changes that may be necessary and to provide the basis for adopting final 2005-2006 management measures at the June Council meeting. Any allocation alternatives or specifications consistent with proposed management measures that will be considered for adoption by the Council need to be identified at this Council meeting. A preliminary draft 2005-2006 Management Specifications Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared by late May, for public review and final Council consideration at the June Council meeting. It will be important that the Council and its advisors carefully deliberate the potential effectiveness of alternative management measures to stay within the alternative harvest levels adopted under agenda C.8. Otherwise, the quality of the 2005-2006 Management Specifications EIS may be compromised if alternatives are not properly structured and analyzed with as much scientific rigor as possible.

To achieve these goals, the Council is scheduled to deliberate 2005-2006 management measure alternatives in three steps this week. Initial refinement of management measures occurs under this agenda, followed by a GMT and GAP check-in on Thursday under agenda C.14, and a final decision on the range of alternatives on Friday under agenda C.15.

**Council Action:**

- 1. Propose initial 2005-06 management measure alternatives for further refinement under agenda items C.14 and C.15.**
- 2. Establish EFP set-asides.**

**References:**

1. Exhibit C.10.a, Attachment 1: Background information relative to state management of nearshore commercial and recreational groundfish fisheries.
2. Exhibit C.10.a, Attachment 2: Background information relative to converting Exempted Fishing Permits into regulations.

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. GMT Recommendations
- c. Recommendations of the States, Tribes, and Federal Agencies
- d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- e. Public Comment
- f. Council Recommendations to Refine Proposed 2005-06 Management Measure Alternatives for Public Review and Establish EFP Set-Asides

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