

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
GROUND FISH ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) spent several hours debating the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on essential fish habitat (EFH), including the proposal presented by Oceana. Several attempts were made to choose a set of preferred alternatives, or at least, narrow the range.

The GAP was extremely frustrated, not only by the time line constraints imposed by the court order, but, more importantly, by the data (or lack thereof) available and used to draft the proposed alternatives. Many of the GAP members believe the data are incomplete and, in some cases, incorrect. In the case of the Oceana alternative, there was insufficient time to fully examine the proposal and understand how it fits within the EIS framework. In addition, the Oceana proposal addressed only one gear type and needs further development.

As a result, in spite of extended discussion and debate and consultation with representatives of NMFS and Oceana, the majority of the GAP believes they are unable to choose among the alternatives shown and, thus, will not forward any recommendations to the Council at this time.

A minority of the GAP believes options can be identified and will submit those to the Council as public comment.

PFMC
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