

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
EXPANSION OF VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS)

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) heard a presentation from Mr. Dayna Mathews, Enforcement Consultants, on the current VMS program and proposed expansion into open access fisheries and has the following comments.

The majority of the GAP supports the expansion of the VMS program into open access fisheries. The majority of the GAP supports the three recommendations provided by the Enforcement Consultants (Agenda Item H.10.c, Supplemental EC Report).

A minority of the GAP would like the Council to explore an option that allows VMS units to be turned off for the remainder of a calendar year once their interaction with groundfish in Federal waters is completed for that year.

The GAP supports the VMS Committee recommendation that the Council and National Marine Fisheries Service continue to investigate the issue of drifting in the Rockfish Conservation Area. The GAP recommends the Council direct NMFS to investigate a declaration system for drifting as defined in the VMS Committee recommendation and report back to the Council in 2006.

The GAP supports the VMS Committee position supporting Federal funding for all VMS requirements and encourages the Council to seek Federal funding to both expand the current program and reimburse members of the limited entry fleets who have already purchased and are currently carrying VMS units.

PFMC
11/03/05