

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) discussed future workload planning issues and offers the following comments.

Catch Share Review

The GAP received a report from Mr. Jim Seger on the draft National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Catch Share Review Guidance and the process envisioned by the Council in conducting its own review. The GAP requests that the Council consider the following:

1. There is no need to request a further delay in issuing the final guidance as it can delay the start of the review. The Council should begin its review in June as originally proposed.
2. The GAP agrees with the idea of including an outside reviewer in whatever review committee is established. While the GAP recognizes that this may impose a financial burden on the Council, the GAP believes the burden can be alleviated by having somebody associated with NMFS or one of the other councils take on this role.
3. The GAP does not agree with the concept of stopping all work on Trawl Rationalization-related matters while the review is being conducted. There are too many crucial issues that are, or will be, in the pipeline and delaying them further will come at a significant cost to the industry. The GAP believes that NMFS can take a “snapshot” of the Trawl Rationalization program, perhaps as it exists in 2016, and conduct the review using that snapshot.

The GAP agrees with using a community panel to help the Council in its review but suggests that the panel be made up of fisherman and processor representatives as well as community representatives that are knowledgeable about the trawl fishery and the Trawl Rationalization program.

Groundfish Gear Changes

The GAP received a report from Mr. Jim Seger on the status of the trawl gear changes approved by the Council at the September meeting. In spite of action by the Council it appears that a number of the proposed changes will not occur due to workload consideration. The GAP points out that gear change issue was identified as one of the top three actions the trawl industry wishes to see occur. These changes were considered to be fundamental changes that needed to occur to make the IFQ program work effectively.

At the first Santa Rosa workshop, Will Stelle in his dinner speech told the audience that with this new program, fisherman would be able to fish where they wanted, when they wanted, and with the gear they wanted. Now that we are coming to the end of the fifth year of this program, the promises made at the beginning of the program have still not been fulfilled.

We request that the Council help find a way to have all of the proposed gear changes implemented.

Astoria Workshop

The GAP heard a brief report from Pete Leipzig, Fishermen's Marketing Association, about a proposed "Open House/Workshop" the trawl industry is planning to occur the day prior to the April Council meeting in Vancouver. The purpose of this event is to display trawl gear and provide a demonstration on how trawl gear works and discuss proposed trawl gear changes. As proposed, there would be fish processing plant and trawl vessel tours. The GAP encourages the Council to plan for and participate in this industry-sponsored session.

Northern California commercial midwater EFP

It has been brought to the attention of the GAP that an inquiry has been made regarding starting the process to implement this EFP into regulation. The response from fishery management has been that insufficient data exists for regulation to be considered. The EFP operators had not foreseen a need to renew this EFP at the November 2015 meeting. They now have a need to do that. The GAP is requesting that the Council provide a process to allow this existing EFP to be considered at the June 2016 Council for final approval. It is a renewal of a previously-approved EFP. It should not require significant workload beyond updating documents and determining harvest caps. This would save the applicants from having to wait two more years to apply for renewal.

PFMC

11/18/15