

ELECTRONIC MONITORING EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT UPDATE AND REVISIONS

At the November 2015 Council meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provided an update to the Council regarding exempted fishing permit (EFP) activity for vessels carrying electronic monitoring (EM) in the catch share program. The Council granted NMFS the authority to expand the number of participants under the existing EFPs with the intent of gathering more information to continue the development of an EM program for non-whiting catch share fisheries (fixed gear, mid-water trawl and bottom trawl). The Council also scheduled another update on EFP activity for these fisheries for the March 2016 meeting.

NMFS provides a report that contains a summary of EFP activity for the fixed gear, non-whiting midwater trawl, and bottom trawl vessels (Agenda Item G.7.a, NMFS Report). Under this agenda item, the Council will consider the NMFS report and decide if an extension of EM EFPs beyond the currently approved timeline of 2015-2016 is necessary. Absent an extension, all EFPs will expire on December 31, 2016. Based on the information that is lacking for the non-whiting midwater trawl and bottom trawl fisheries, the Council may want to consider an extension of the EFPs through 2018.

At the November 2015 Council meeting, the Council chose to combine the whiting and fixed gear rulemakings into one regulatory package, scheduled EFP updates for 2016, and scheduled discussion of the non-whiting mid-water trawl and bottom trawl regulatory timeline (Table 1). The Council may want to consider their recommendation for EFP extensions and how it may affect the current timeline for development of the non-whiting midwater trawl and bottom trawl fishery EM programs. Currently, the Council is scheduled to verify their final preferred alternatives for the non-whiting mid-water trawl and bottom trawl fisheries in November of 2016 (Table 1).

Table 1. Schedule for EM program development for all catch share fisheries.

Year	Month	Scheduled Item
2016	January	GEMPAC working webinar (conducted on Jan 20 th) to develop whiting and fixed gear regulations
	March	GEMPAC working webinar to review/comment on CFR style whiting and fixed gear regulations as needed (conducted March 3); Council receives update on non-whiting EFPs; discuss Non-Whiting midwater trawl and bottom trawl schedule
	April	GEMPAC reviews whiting and fixed gear regulations at Council meeting; Council receives update on fixed gear costs; Council takes final action on fixed gear (verify FPA); deems whiting and fixed gear regulations (CFR Style)
	June	Whiting and fixed gear proposed rule publishes
	July	Whiting and fixed gear public comment period
	September	Whiting and fixed gear final rule publishes
	October	Whiting and fixed gear final rule effective, begin implementation
	November	Non-whiting midwater trawl/bottom trawl EFP update; Verify FPA
	December	All EFPs expire December 31
2017	January-June	Further development of non-whiting midwater trawl and bottom trawl impact analysis; development of draft regulations

Council Action:

- 1. Consider Timeline for EM Program and Regulatory Development.**
- 2. Recommend Extensions for Exempted Fishing Permits Related to Electronic Monitoring in Groundfish Catch Share Fisheries.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.7.a, NMFS Report.

Agenda Order:

- G.7 Electronic Monitoring Exempted Fishing Permit Update and Revisions Brett Wiedoff
a. NMFS Report Melissa Hooper
b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
c. Public Comment
d. **Council Action:** Recommend Extensions for Exempted Fishing Permits Related to
Electronic Monitoring in Groundfish Catch Share Fisheries

PFMC
2/12/16