

JOINT NMFS/COUNCIL STAFF REPORT ON A POTENTIAL TIMELINE FOR
ELECTRONIC MONITORING REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT

At the September 2016 Council meeting, the Council moved the agenda item “Electronic Monitoring Non-whiting Midwater and Bottom Trawl Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Update & Final Preferred Alternative (FPA)” from the November 2016 meeting to the April 2017 meeting. In response to this, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Council staff provide Table 1 for the Council to discuss completion of this agenda item.

The Council may want to discuss whether it would like to receive the EFP update in March (currently not on March Year-At-A-Glance) and whether it is necessary to add deeming of the draft Electronic Monitoring (EM) regulations to the April 2017 meeting. Recall the Council deemed the Whiting and Fixed Gear Fisheries EM Program regulations at the April 2016 meeting. It’s expected that the regulations to implement an EM program for the bottom trawl add non-whiting midwater trawl fisheries would be minimal and focus on gear-specific discard and catch handling regulations; other regulations may be added as necessary pending final preferred alternative selection.

The Council may also wish to discuss the structure of alternatives for retention rules for these gear types. The September 2014 version of the analytical document packaged bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl measures together. However, NMFS and Council staff have noted that bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl fisheries are prosecuted differently in the EM EFP and may warrant consideration of different sorting and retention rules under an EM program. Therefore, NMFS and Council staff intend to revise the analytical document to analyze separate alternatives for bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl. This will provide the Council flexibility when verifying the preferred alternatives for each fishery at the April 2017 Council meeting.

NMFS/Council staff would appreciate the Council’s guidance regarding these questions:

1. Would the Council like to receive an EFP update in March before finalizing FPAs in April?
2. Would the Council like to review and deem the draft regulations at the April 2017 Council meeting or delegate deeming to the Council Executive Director?

Table 1. Proposed timeline for development of EM regulations for bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl fisheries.

Proposed EM Regulatory Development Timeline		
2017	February	GEMPAC working webinar on review of current EFP data, Final Preferred Alternatives, and draft EM regulations
	April	EM EFP update to Council and Advisory Bodies; GEMPAC verifies bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl FPAs; Council takes final action to verify FPAs; Optional review of draft EM regulations again
	July	Bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl gear proposed rule publishes
	August	Public comment period
	September	Final rule publishes
2018	January	Bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl vessels begin fishing under EM regulations

PFMC
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