

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON ELECTRONIC MONITORING
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) was briefed by Ms. Karen Palmigiano on the timeline for electronic monitoring (EM) development and implementation for the whiting, fixed gear, and bottom trawl sectors, as well as recent staffing changes and remaining policies and guidelines which still to be developed and are necessary for implementation. The GAP believes the new staffing changes are a step in the right direction as there has been very little information exchange and almost no transparency around the EM rule and related policies and guidelines for many months. The GAP notes that there are still a number of critical components of EM not yet developed that will fundamentally affect whether the program realizes its ultimate goal of lower cost accountability. The GAP believes that developing those policies based on significant input from industry, the Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Policy Advisory Committee/Technical Advisory Committee (GEMPAC/TAC) and other advisory bodies will greatly increase the likelihood of ultimate success.

The GAP recommends scheduling time on the Council's agenda for review of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) final and draft procedural policies that are germane to the EM program. We heard through Council staff that this could occur in June. In addition, based on the NMFS timeline presentation, GEMPAC and GEMTAC meetings may be necessary for review of the guidelines being developed by NMFS for review in September and November.

The GAP notes that the timeline to move from proposed to final rule for the bottom trawl sector appears unrealistically short, especially after the many years taken to get to this point. It is our belief that it is much more important to ensure a good rule than a speedy one. Therefore, we see value in scheduling GEMPAC meetings (via webinar or in person, as appropriate) to discuss mixed species discard solutions and flexible management in the bottom trawl fishery with the hope that they can be addressed in the proposed rule.

We look forward to working closely with Ms. Palmigiano and Mr. Kavanaugh as the rules and related policies are developed over the coming months.

PFMC
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