

## SCOPING FOR AMENDMENT 24: IMPROVEMENTS TO THE GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Under this agenda item the Council is tasked to begin scoping an amendment (Amendment 24) to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (Groundfish FMP) to address problems that have become apparent in the current biennial process for developing and implementing harvest specifications and management measures. These problems have manifested in repeatedly late implementation of final regulations for harvest specifications and management measures, and in the 2011-12 cycle, the unusual use of a Secretarial Amendment to achieve finality. In response, the Council formed the Groundfish Process Improvement Committee (GPIC) to look into developing a more workable process for future management cycles. After hearing the GPIC and other Advisory Body reports at their April and June 2011 meetings, and deciding the only way to achieve timely completion of the 2013-14 final regulations was to vastly narrow the scope of consideration, the Council supported further investigation of developing an FMP amendment to address process problems in time for the 2015-16 cycle. This agenda item represents the start of that process.

Attachment 1 is a staff white paper that describes different ways to address problems with the current process. It includes three example alternatives to help the Council begin scoping the range of measures that could be included in an FMP amendment. The white paper also lays out a proposed schedule for an FMP amendment process intended to implement changes by the end of 2013 so that the next harvest specifications and management measures cycle could use the revised process. Under the proposed schedule, the Council would review and adopt a range of alternatives at their November 2012 meeting and take final action in March 2013.

At this meeting, the Council should provide guidance on a preliminary range of alternatives for further analysis, including any specific target areas for focused development. The Council may also want to establish a small ad hoc work group to advance the development of this material. From a workload timing perspective, it is anticipated such a work group would begin to spend concerted effort after the June Council meeting, with a the objective of completing a report by mid-October to include in the advance Briefing Book for the November 2012 Council meeting. Attachment 2 discusses the potential composition of such a workgroup.

### **Council Action:**

**Provide Direction for Development and Scheduling of the Amendment 24 Process.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 1: Staff White Paper on an FMP Amendment to Change the Groundfish Specifications and Management Measures Process.
2. Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 2: Amendment 24 (Groundfish Harvest Specifications Process Improvement) Ad-Hoc Workgroup.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Provide Direction for Development and Scheduling of the Amendment 24 Process

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