


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Clarence G. Pautzke
Executive Director 

DATE: June 2, 1995

SUBJECT: Electronic Reporting Requirements

ESTIMATED TIME 1/2 Hour

ACTION REQUIRED

Final review of regulatory amendment to implement requirements for electronic reporting.

BACKGROUND

The objective of this regulatory amendment is to implement requirements for all processors of groundfish to obtain electronic communication equipment that will facilitate electronic reporting of fisheries data. Use of this equipment by observers should reduce both the time and expense of collecting fishery information by providing real-time data, reducing the workload of the Observer Program. Currently, most industry reports are submitted by FAX, and all logbooks are kept on paper. Electronic communication of reports would greatly improve efficiency and reduce costs associated with report submission and processing. The draft EA/RIR was mailed to you on May 11, 1995.

The alternatives are:

- Alternative 1: Status quo. Maintain the current methods and equipment for transmission of data from processors.
- Alternative 2: Require all processor vessels that process groundfish to have satellite communication equipment and the necessary hardware and software for electronic transmission of observer data. Require all shoreside processors that process groundfish to have the necessary computer hardware and software to send data electronically via a modem.

In April 1994, the SSC and AP reviewed a discussion paper which described a two-part program of electronic reporting and recordkeeping. Part 1 addressed electronic submission of in-season data by all shoreside and at-sea processors, all catcher vessels with 100% coverage, and all catcher vessels with 30% coverage. Part 2 addressed electronic logbooks.

In their review of this earlier discussion paper, the SSC stated that such a system could improve both quality and timeliness of data collection and encouraged NMFS to proceed with development of an EA/RIR. The AP recommended that the Council refer this subject to a committee to develop additional alternatives before proceeding further. They suggested including alternatives that examine such things as report pools.

The Council approved the draft EA/RIR for public review at its April 1995 meeting. In order for this amendment to be effective January 1, 1996, the Council must take final action at this meeting.