



Commercial Electronic Vessel Trip Report (eVTR) Omnibus Framework

Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT)

Webinar Meeting Summary

March 19, 2019

FMAT Members Present: Karson Coutre (Council Staff), Moira Kelly (GARFO), Jay Hermsen (GARFO), Jen Anderson (GARFO), Josh Moser (NEFSC), Sam Ascii (NEFMC)

The FMAT received a draft Action Plan in advance of the meeting and MAFMC staff gave a brief presentation of the Framework initiation, timeline, and draft alternatives. The FMAT provided feedback on the presented information and discussed framework development.

The following comments and recommendations were made by the eVTR FMAT:

Analyses

- The ocean quahog and surf clam fleet will not be captured by summaries of submitted VTRs and need to be included in the analysis of affected users.
- The commercial eVTRs currently being submitted and what platform they are using should be summarized. Commercial VTRs submitted electronically by fishery, permit type, state, reporting application used, etc., should be explored to understand where eVTR is already occurring.
- Include a summary of reporting after one year of implementation of eVTR with for-hire sector including favored means of submission.

Alternatives

- There was concern by an FMAT member that the alternatives are currently all or nothing. An alternative considering phasing eVTR requirements in by fishery could help software providers and managers support the influx. There will likely be a bottleneck right before the deadline and it will be challenging to get everyone transitioned.
- In response, there was further discussion regarding the large degree of overlap between fisheries because fishermen often have multiple permits so affected users by fishery is hard to define. There may be other creative ways to phase in users during implementation such as during permit renewal that would not need to be addressed as an alternative.

Outreach and communication

- When discussing reporting requirements, it is helpful to remind everyone that multiple permit holders are held to the most stringent reporting requirements.
- Multiple FMAT members agreed that it would be beneficial to present to the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) after the April Council meeting to provide an update on action details and timeline. Due to the large number of affected

users in New England, there should be communication with NEFMC at each stage of the process. If there aren't many New England participants in the upcoming AP meeting, more opportunities for comment should occur before final action is taken. The NEFMC June meeting is the week after the MAFMC June meeting so the only opportunity for providing updates at a NEFMC meeting is in April.

- There is concern that the NEFSC does not have the resources to support broad deployment of FLDRS.
- It will be crucial to engage with affected users to emphasize that there doesn't need to be a timeline for an individual fisherman, they can start using eVTR now, which can help decrease a bottleneck.
- It is important to give people time to come into compliance, plan for trainings and workshops at ports throughout the affected range while also engaging with port agents and communications teams throughout framework action timeline.

Other comments

- There is concern that the commercial fleet generally uses windows-based computers and may not want to use phone applications when choosing from available reporting applications.
- Clarity needs to be provided on whether fishermen can fill out paper VTRs at sea and enter the information into an approved electronic application upon returning to port. What are the considerations for the required records when at sea? During the for-hire action, managers were not able to fully describe the downstream implications of eVTR and record keeping requirements. For example, if you don't leave your tablets or phones containing VTR records on the boat, are you out of compliance?
- The FMAT should meet in May 2019 to discuss the April Council meeting outcomes and implications with the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE). The OLE should be invited to the May FMAT meeting in order to discuss compliance issues before the Council takes final action.

After the FMAT meeting, one member provided further comments via email. Another member asked a clarification question. These comments were not discussed by the full FMAT but are summarized below:

- There is concern over the collective ability of partner organizations managing eVTR data to provide required support to industry and it would be helpful to determine if these systems have the resources needed to support full commercial eVTR or if a phased approach should be considered to ensure supportability.
- There should be examination of ways to encourage voluntary participation as the mandate will lead to foreseeable bottlenecks for industry, software providers and NMFS.
- One FMAT member asked for clarification on whether this action would apply to permits under the FMPs that are jointly managed by MAFMC and NEFMC (i.e. monkfish, and dogfish). GARFO staff responded that the general rule has been that the lead-Council's plans are covered, but not the others, so dogfish would be included, and monkfish would not.