



## Commercial Electronic Vessel Trip Report (eVTR) Omnibus Framework Combined Advisory Panel Meeting Summary

**March 25, 2019**

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Advisory Panels (AP) for species requiring commercial permits met via webinar March 25, 2019 to review and comment on the upcoming Commercial eVTR Omnibus Framework. These APs include Spiny Dogfish (DF), Tilefish (TF), Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB), Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass (SFSBSB), Bluefish (BF), and Surfclam and Ocean Quahog (SCOQ). The Council is considering requiring commercial vessels with federal permits for species managed by the Council to submit their VTRs electronically. The Council will consider feedback provided by the APs at its April 2019 meeting.

**Advisory Panel members present:** Gerry O'Neill (MSB), Bonnie Brady (DF, SFSBSB), Greg DiDomenico (MSB), Jeff Kaelin (MSB), Emerson Hasbrouck, Jr. (MSB), Michael Plaia (SFSBSB), Katie Almeida (SFSBSB), Dr. Michael Ferrigno (SCOQ), Meghan Lapp (MSB), Howard King (SFSBSB), Skip Feller (SFSBSB, TF), Peter Himchak (SCOQ), Scott Curatolo-Wagemann (DF), Fred Akers (TF), Chris Spies (SFSBSB), Carl Benson (SFSBSB)

**Others present:** Karson Coutre (Council Staff), Kiley Dancy (Council Staff), Matt Seeley (Council Staff), Eric Reid (Council Member), Peter Hughes (Council Member), Barry Clifford (GARFO), Jay Hermsen (GARFO), John Hoey (NEFSC), Greg Power (GARFO), Torey Adler (GARFO), Steven Ellis (GARFO), Libby Etrie (NEFMC Member), Carrie Kennedy (MD DNR), Tara McClintock (Cornell), Zack Greenberg (Pew), Heidi Henninger (Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association), "Drew", "GJW"

**Note: Advisor comments described below are not necessarily consensus or majority statements.**

### *Enforcement*

- Multiple advisors and one Council member voiced concern over how technical failures would be handled. If software crashes will there be some sort of waiver or will a backup paper VTR be allowed until an eVTR can be submitted?
- A NEFMC member wanted more clarity on reporting timing and what exactly is changing including whether VTRs still need to be filled out before hitting the dock.

### *Affected users and initial alternatives*

- Nearly all advisors who provided input as well as several other attendees present felt that the timeline discussed is too ambitious and that the commercial fleet will not be able to

meet it without significant issues. One advisor stated that the implications of this action have not been considered thoroughly enough to move forward. Another advisor stated it was too early in the development to support either alternative.

- One advisor recommended that this action consider small boat fisheries exemptions because it may be too hard to fill out VTRs electronically on a device before hitting the dock.
- Another advisor did not support exemptions and supports status quo until there are more programmatic improvements with FLDRS since it has been full of fits and starts. He would also support phasing in eVTR fishery by fishery. One advisor stated he can't support mandated eVTR now; he uses FLDRs through the study fleet but is worried about falling out of compliance so also submits paper VTRs. An NEFSC staff member stated that this is an ambitious timeline, but they will work together to respond to the Council action.
- One advisor asked if this action included Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permits and wondered why not. MAFMC staff noted that permit holders are still held to their strictest reporting requirements so if someone had an HMS permit and a commercial MAFMC managed species permit they would have to report electronically, for all species caught, should this action move forward. If they only held an HMS permit, they are not included in this action. MAFMC staff confirmed that if you have an incidental tilefish permit and an HMS permit that allows you to sell, eVTR would be required with this action.
- A Council member asked about planned outreach to the South Atlantic stakeholders and how many in that region will be affected.
- An NEFMC member stated she was participating as someone who works with the groundfish sector in New England and recommended being clear on the goals of this action and which redundancies were being reduced. She expressed concern over the large amount of New England stakeholders being affected.
- One advisor asked whether this action would allow for management benefits such as more timely closures and earlier paybacks and can those benefits be listed in the goals and objectives for the action.

#### *eVTR Applications, data, and technical support*

- Several advisors and a Council member voiced concern over whether there would be enough technical support for the various software applications, highlighting the need for in-person support at the dock. One advisor asked if port agents would be trained and brought in for ground support. GARFO staff responded that port agents currently provide some eVTR support and would be trained for future support.
- One advisor would like to see the breakdown of who is currently using the different eVTR applications in the commercial sector.
- Several advisors voiced concern over NGOs providing approved eVTR applications.
- A NEFMC member stated that NGOs are still held to the same standard as government applications and it would be helpful to include an explanation of how the data is handled by those organizations. People are using third party providers and may want to continue to use those applications. GARFO staff clarified that agencies and organizations that have

approved eVTR applications are only in possession of the data collected by their own applications.

- Three advisors recommended transitioning to eVTR by working with the NEFSC Cooperative Research group since they have worked with issues that arise using eVTR. An advisor also recommended more Wi-Fi hubs in ports as a means of decreasing the burden of electronic submission.
- One advisor asked whether there were any vessels with LaMonica Seafoods that are not currently using eCLAMS.
- One advisor noted that in the past there has been funding for the initial devices and asked if that would be a considered incentive with this action.
- A Council member wanted to know how eVTRs would feed into state data and state reporting requirements.
- An attendee who works with data management for the state of Maryland was concerned about data integration, how the information would be shared with the states and whether this would solve issues with duplicative reporting or create more issues. She also noted that the FACTs program is accessible by phone or tablet.

Note: Staff will continue to work with the FMAT to answer the questions raised by the AP and provide further clarification on potential implementation details, after receiving guidance from the Council.