MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 8, 2015

TO: New England Fishery Management Council
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

FROM: Industry-funded Monitoring Plan Development Team/Fishery Management Action Team

SUBJECT: Industry-funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment Development

1. The PDT/FMAT met in person on April 3, 2015, to continue development of the Industry-funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment. PDT/FMAT participants included Carrie Nordeen, Katie Richardson, Andrew Kitts, Sara Weeks, Matt Cieri, Brad Schondelmeier, Wendy Gabriel, Jason Didden (MAFMC), and Lori Steele (NEFMC), and several members of the public.

2. **Revised Amendment Timeline**

   There was general consensus at the meeting that the selection of preferred alternatives should be pushed back one Council meeting. NMFS staff is evaluating whether relaxing the current timeline is appropriate given other GARFO workload priorities for late 2015. The action plan is being revised to include both the current and fallback timelines.

Current Timeline	Fallback Timeline	Meeting/Deadline	Action
March 3, 2015		PDT/FMAT Meeting, Gloucester	
Early April 2015		PDT/FMAT Meeting, Virtual?	
April 16, 2015		Observer Policy Committee Meeting	
Early May 2015		PDT/FMAT Meeting, Virtual?	
May 27, 2015	**September 11, 2015**	MAFMC Briefing book deadline	Revised EA complete for release
June 8, 2015		Joint Herring/Observer Policy Committee Meeting	
June 9 – 11, 2015	**October 6 – 8, 2015**	MAFMC Meeting	MAFMC selects preferred alternatives
June 16 – 18, 2015	**September 29 – October 1, 2015**	NEFMC Meeting	NEFMC selects preferred alternatives
July/August 2015	**October/November 2015**		30-day comment period on draft EA
September 29 – October 1, 2015	**January 2016**	NEFMC Meeting	NEFMC takes final action
October 6 – 8, 2015	**February 2016**	MAFMC Meeting	MAFMC takes final action

Late October/Early November 2015	**March/April 2016**		EA finalized, proposed rule drafted
November 2015	**April 2016**		Proposed rule publishes with 30-day comment period
December 2015	**May 2016**		Comment period ends, final rule drafted
January 2016	**June 2016**		Final rule publishes
February 2016	**July 2016**		Final rule effective

3. Portside and electronic monitoring

GARFO staff introduced ideas on what an electronic monitoring and portside sampling program for the herring and mackerel fisheries would entail. This program would ideally first focus on the midwater trawl fleet because of its size and operation. The midwater trawl fleet is composed of approximately 20 vessels that are responsible for the majority of herring, mackerel, and river herring harvest and bycatch. Operationally, midwater trawl vessels discard less than 5% of catch at sea. This means that electronic monitoring can be easily used to verify retention of catch at sea, and that portside sampling can be used in lieu of at-sea sampling to determine species composition and collection biological data. The PDT agreed that they would recommend that the Council add a combined alternative for electronic monitoring and portside sampling for the midwater trawl fleet as an Omnibus alternative.

The group also discussed how the alternatives would be structured, and if the Council would be able to select a different monitoring program for the fleets using gear types other than midwater trawl. Further investigation is needed to provide specifics on how this program will fully function. Some additional questions were raised about how to address specific details of electronic monitoring and portside sampling including:

- How much data will be collected with the cameras (trade-off of data review costs vs. data needs)?
- Data distribution between gear types within the same fishery, how would they be made proportional?
- What happens to the data port-side if there is a slippage event?
- How would transfers-at-sea be addressed in this program?
- What will be the roles of NMFS and the states in the portside sampling program?
- What are the logistics of offloading at specified ports and docks in this program?
- How would training be conducted for portside sampling?

The group reviewed an example of a Vessel Monitoring Plan and discussed how these may be used in the electronic monitoring and portside sampling program. Since there are approximately 20 vessels in the midwater trawl fleet that would be functioning under this program, the PDT generally agreed that preparing Vessel Monitoring Plans for each vessel would be plausible and effective. Developing Vessel Monitoring Plans would allow more flexibility in the application of

this new program, and would allow the regulations for an electronic monitoring and portside sampling program to be broader in scope and definition and the specific requirements would be included in each individual plan.

4. Development of herring at-sea monitoring options and related analysis

NEFMC staff presented some additional analysis and discussion on the development of herring at-sea monitoring options. This discussion primarily focused on reviewing the different elements that affect the cost of a sea day and which of those elements is driving the cost to increase or decrease. The PDT also developed a list of the fishery characteristics that should be reviewed for the economic analysis of alternatives. Finally, the group reviewed a draft matrix of monitoring needs for both the herring and mackerel fishery and how the different alternatives will meet those needs. MAFMC staff agreed to expand the matrix to be included in information presented to the Councils.