



NOAA
FISHERIES

Office of
Sustainable
Fisheries

OIG Action Plan

CCC Meeting

February 20-21, 2013

Background

- Review requested by Congressmen Frank and Tierney on August 17, 2011.
- First report, issued January 16, 2013, evaluated the role of NOAA and the Councils in the fishery rulemaking process and the transparency of the rulemaking process.
- Audit action plan describing actions to be taken and target date of implementation due to NOAA February 20, 2013.

Findings

- Council voting members' financial disclosures did not increase transparency and lacked effective review.
- NMFS did not fully implement regulatory streamlining.
- Maintenance of rules packages and administrative records were not consistent across NMFS regional offices.

OIG Recommendations – Financial Disclosure

1. Strengthen policy guidance on financial disclosure by Council voting members, with emphasis on how NOAA intends to handle specific consequences for conflicts or potential conflicts it identifies.
2. Strengthen processes for formal reviews of financial interest disclosures, considering the time period that the disclosure covers, how financial interest amounts relate to voting restrictions, and when affiliations with outside organizations should be reported.
3. Strengthen criteria for identifying conflicts of interest and processes to follow up on any conflicts that are identified.

OIG Recommendations – Regulatory Streamlining

4. Finalize draft Operational Guidelines and provide them to NMFS regional offices.
5. Finalize regional operating agreements between NMFS regional offices and Councils.

OIG Recommendations – Records

6. Develop uniform procedures for the collection, management, and maintenance of documents supporting decisions and administrative records associated with fishery regulations.

Next Steps

- NOAA review of action plan before submission to OIG.
- Additional reports/reviews expected:
 - Report summarizing results of Council survey
 - Review of catch share programs
 - “Determine the adequacy of controls NOAA has in place to make decisions related to catch share allocations.
 - Entrance Conference will be scheduled.



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