



**WESTERN  
PACIFIC  
REGIONAL  
FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL**

**VMS Standing Committee Meeting**

**15 June 1999  
100th Council Meeting  
Ala Moana Hotel  
Honolulu, Hawaii**

**1. Introduction**

The VMS Standing Committee Chair, Tom Webster, opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

**2. Report on VMS issues discussed at MAFAC Meeting**

Jim Cook reported that he and Kitty Simonds attended the MAFAC meeting held in San Diego, March, 1999. Jim Cook provided a brief background on the VMS issue. NMFS is in the process of developing a national VMS program and tried to create an industry advisory panel to provide guidance during the program development. NMFS encountered problems with establishing the industry panel and opted instead to use MAFAC for industry guidance. At the San Diego meeting, MAFAC told NMFS that they did not want to be the body to represent industry and recommended that the responsibility be turned over to the Councils. NMFS will now have to work with the Councils in creating their national VMS program. No comments were heard.

**3. Report on FFA MCS Working Group Meeting**

Tom Webster reported on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter-sessional Meeting on Monitoring Control and Surveillance held at the FFA in Honiara, May 1999. He noted that the FFA's VMS base station is now operational but only a small number of vessels are being monitored. All Countries either have their program operational or are in the process of developing a program. They are still having problems getting the distant water fishing nations to comply with the VMS requirement. No comments were heard.

**4. Advisory Panel recommendations regarding VMS**

Dave Kalthoff reported that the Pelagics and Native and Indigenous Rights Advisory Panels met in April and recommended that VMS be required on all vessels larger than 50 feet throughout the Council's

areas. Committee members had numerous questions as to the rationale of the recommendation. Dave Kalthoff responded that there was concern that foreign fishing may be occurring in the Council's EEZ areas. Committee members also questioned the 50 foot requirement and commented that such a blanket requirement is not justified at this time. The Committee agreed that VMS should be tailored to specific fisheries as it is needed for monitoring or enforcing regulations.

## **5. Other Issues**

No other issues were raised.

## **6. Public Comment**

No public comment was heard.

## **7. Recommendations:**

1. Require VMS for specific fisheries or fleets as needed and when justified as an effective enforcement or management tool.