

summarize the available data and give preliminary estimates of stock biomass, yield, and bycatch.

Tuesday, February 9, 1999, 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.—Scallop Committee Meeting
Location: Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886, telephone: (401) 739-3000

Initial consideration of management options for re-opening groundfish closed areas to fishing for scallops. The Scallop Plan Development Team and Scallop Advisory Panel will give progress reports.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before these groups for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see ADDRESSES) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: January 13, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Electronic Transportation Acquisition

AGENCY: Military Traffic Management Command, DoD.

ACTION: Notice (Request for Comments).

SUMMARY: The Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), Product Management Office (PMO), CONUS Freight Management (CFM) System is proposing to migrate its business operating system from an aged DOS-based, batch architecture to a real-time, internet-based software design. Concurrently, the PMO CFM proposes to incorporate streamlined, simplified transportation and payment procedures. These procedures mirror current Department Of Defense (DOD) transportation policy initiatives, i.e., the re-engineering of Defense transportation and payment documentation processes identified within Dr. John Hamre's (Deputy Secretary of Defense)

Management Reform Memorandum (MRM) #15.

To replace CFM's current operating system (Field Module), we propose a unique suite of internet-based functionality, referred to as Electronic Transportation Acquisition (ETA). ETA is a DOD electronic commerce resource capable of generating shipment requirements, acquiring carrier rates, and transmitting transportation and payment information for DOD freight shipments. The focus of this **Federal Register** notice applies to the two functional areas currently undergoing testing. The first functional area is CFM's newly developed, web-based transportation acquisition methodology called Spot Bid. Spot Bid provides users with the initial automated support for freight movements allowing participating carriers to bid on freight movements other than Negotiated and Guaranteed Traffic (GT) shipments. The second functional area talks to the CFM interface with Usbank's payment system called Power Track. Power Track is a 3rd party payment system that facilitates the transfer of transportation payment information contained in an electronic bill-of-lading between the shipper, carrier, Usbank, and the appropriate Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) payment center. A description of ETA's suite of functionality and specific details, business procedures, and preliminary results of the tests regarding spot bid and Power Track are identified in the Supplementary Information.

Before the effective date of any proposed procurement policy or procedure, 41 U.S.C. 418b requires an agency to give members of the public up to 60 days to comment on the proposed policy or procedure. Although Electronic Transportation Acquisition is in essence a technical change to an already existing spot bid procurement process and thus **Federal Register** publication may not be required, we believe it is important to provide the transportation industry and members of the public an opportunity to assist us in developing, improving, and streamlining transportation procurements and processes.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before March 23, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Headquarters, Military Traffic Management Command, ATTN: MTOP-TS, 5611 Columbia Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-5050.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Steve Lord, e-mail, lords@baileys-emh5.army.mil, Telephone (703) 681-1185, Fax (703) 681-9871.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background of ETA

Approximately two years ago, it became apparent that the next logical step in CFM's incremental development strategy was to migrate the CFM architecture from a rapidly aging DOS-based, batch process, fat client-server system to an Internet-based, real-time, on-line transaction process. The rapid advent of Internet technologies, applications, new dynamic software languages (such as Java), coupled with the rapid advancement of interactive databases, and tremendous growth of on-line electronic commerce made it clear that the benefits of an Internet-based CFM far outweighed the potential disadvantages. Moreover, the ETA modernization strategy directly supports DOD objectives. Although this notice will focus on Spot Bid and the use of Usbank's Power Track payment system, we believe it is beneficial to provide freight carriers a brief description of what current functions CFM proposes to move to the web.

In summary, ETA's suite of functionality includes three core freight-shipping applications: (1) Tenders (Guaranteed, Negotiated and Voluntary); (2) Spot Bid; (3) and Worldwide Small Package. In addition, it includes a variety of transportation support tools and references such as GT Bid Submission, Transportation Facilities Guide, Transportation Discrepancy Reports, and Carrier Added Value Suite (CAVS). CAVS consists of three sub-components: (1) tender view; (2) completed shipments; (3) and bill-of-lading view.

Spot Bid Procedures

Definition

The PMO CFM is currently developing a spot bid implementation schedule which identifies a proposed phased roll-out to begin in Spring 99. Spot Bid is a single consignment of one or more pieces from one consignor at one time, at one origin address receipted for in one lot and moving to one consignee at one destination address. Included within this definition are: split pickup at origin and destination points and stop in transit to partially load and/or unload.

The Spot Bid function supports the DOD shipper's ability to provide movement requirements for a single shipment on the Internet. Shippers can elect to offer the shipment to one or all modes i.e., Spot Bid supports all modes. Following the posting of the requirement on the web, MTMC-approved freight carriers can access the shipper's movement request, review it, and elect to bid on it.

As part of the shipment movement request, a "closing date and time" is provided which prevents carriers from bidding on shipments after a certain time identified by the shipper. Carriers can submit their bid, cancel the original bid, and resubmit a new bid during the indicated open period. Bids are only accessible by the shipper following the closing date/time. Once the bids have been reviewed, the shipper can elect to award the shipment. The shipper/MTMC then posts the award information on the web and all participating bidding carriers can review their competitors' bids and identify which carrier, if any, was awarded the traffic. The Spot Bid system then provides the shipper/MTMC with the needed tools to generate the bill-of-lading data and hardcopy that accompanies the conveyance. Presently, all bid times are based on Eastern Time. Therefore, it is critical that bidding carriers outside EST account for the time difference(s). It is MTMC's objective to provide our freight shippers/customers with an easy, effective and robust tool that will help them acquire rates and services while providing our industry partners with a simplified rate structure. In meeting those objectives, we will potentially increase new business opportunities and allow carriers to identify and capitalize on back-haul opportunities.

The Spot Bid function can be used for all freight shipments other than Negotiated and GT business. Following the Spot Bid process, the shipper has the discretion to use either Spot Bid or an existing voluntary tender rate—if available. The "bid" serves as the carrier's offered rate; therefore the submission of a 364-R tender is no longer required. Instead, the carrier is required to submit a single factor rate that is inclusive of linehaul, accessorial services, and/or special-permit charges (if applicable). Additionally, Spot Bid does not require the shipper/MTMC to request specific equipment from the carrier. If there is a need to do so, the shipper/MTMC will annotate the equipment requirement in the bid proposal's "Remarks" block. However, the business process is changing somewhat in that we are requiring the transportation providers, in lieu of the shippers, to assess what type of equipment is appropriate and/or available for the shipment.

Technical Requirements

Quite simply, both shippers and carriers only require hardware capable of running the latest generation of web browsers (available freely on the Internet) and access to the Internet.

Specifically, a laptop or Personal Computer (PC), a minimum of 486, with modem or network access to the Internet is required. Java-capable Internet browsers, e.g. Netscape Navigator or Communicator 4.0 or Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0, are required. Versions lower than 4.0 should not be used and browser upgrades are available for free on the Internet. A current and operational e-mail address will be required as a means of communication between MTMC/CFM, the shippers and carriers. E-mail will be utilized to transfer user password information. In that light, the suite of functions within ETA will be accessible through a single login identification and password process. In summary, rights and privileges to access ETA's functions, e.g., Spot Bid, will be granted through the issuance of digital certificates to both Government and industry representatives. Further information and procedures will be provided to all CFM ETA users in the next few months.

Spot Bid Tests

MTMC continues to test CFM Spot Bid at eight CONUS sites. Specifically, Anniston Army Depot, AL; DCMC Boston, MA; Ft Bragg, NC; Sunnypoint, NC; USPFs Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas; and Nellis AFB, NV are currently using Spot Bid. CFM is coordinating test procedures with Navy's Fleet Industrial Supply Center (FISC), Norfolk, VA and Naval Weapons Station (NWS), Yorktown, VA. Eighteen carriers are participating in the test (13 motor, 3 rail, and 2 air carriers) and to date, approximately 100 shipments have moved under Spot Bid while over 300 bid offers have occurred. The balance of offers that did not move under Spot Bid were attributable to either technical or administrative start-up problems, too little time for carriers to prepare a bid, i.e., bid window was too short, or bids were higher than existing tender rates.

Feedback from the test sites has been very positive from both carriers and shippers. Spot bid has been described as a flexible, user-friendly, and effective tool for acquiring rates and services via the Internet. Admittedly, due to the small population of test sites and carriers, it is premature to project cost savings in the form of transportation costs. Many test sites indicated that they believe the overall effectiveness of Spot Bid will increase vastly when we offer the system to all MTMC-approved carriers and expand the Government user base. Consequently, the issues alluded to above, regarding higher costs and lack of bidding carriers, will be offset by greater participation and competition. In addition, test carriers'

comments have been very encouraging as well. The reduced administration in providing a bid, the ability to price based on an order versus a forecast, and ease of use, are just a few of the positive descriptions. Test carriers' concerns have focused on the short bid window that is afforded them by the shipper and the lack of notification of a bid. Coordination and training with the shipping community coupled with MTMC management oversight and CFM technology will remedy these problems. The CFM PMO is working closely with the MTMC Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations to coordinate Spot Bid management oversight and customer support issues. MTMC personnel will support both Government and industry users of Spot Bid. In addition, CFM is actively incorporating many of the specific recommendations that both Government and carrier representatives have provided throughout the test period.

In summary, both Government and industry participants have so far fully embraced the migration of this business process to the internet, and most importantly, have validated to us that the internet is the next logical area to conduct freight transportation acquisition business. Clearly, we encourage comments from the entire carrier industry to help us identify all issues associated with our Web-based spot bid process.

USBank PowerTrack Payment System

Background

This system is currently undergoing an evaluation process for implementation. MTMC is continuing to evaluate the test results. Based upon the results of this evaluation, MTMC will determine the implementation parameters in concert with prototype efforts. In Management Reform Memorandum #15, Dr. John Hamre identified a series of initiatives to address perceived shortcomings of the transportation and payment processes. One of the initiatives included developing an improved payment mechanism for surface transportation. The goal is to reduce data requirements that are currently necessary for payment, and increase data accuracy. At the same time, Dr. Hamre envisioned paying commercial carriers for services provided as soon as possible.

Description

Power Track is an automated on-line payment processing and transaction tracking system that supports logistical transactions. Power Track consists of five primary functions: (1) electronic

data transmission; (2)-payment approval process; (3) electronic payment and billing; (4) communication for dispute resolution; (5) and customized data analysis.

Technical Requirements

Power Track software requires a 486 or higher laptop or PC (Pentium and higher is preferred). Internet connectivity is needed. Currently, Power Track supports a single browser only, i.e., Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher. USbank is planning to modify their browser requirement to include multiple browser options in the near future. Lastly, the file size that Power Track loads on each user's computer is no more than 4MB. Questions pertaining to Power Track's technical requirements should be addressed to: Everett Doolittle, Vice President, Business Development, USbank, 1010 South Seventh Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415, telephone 612-973-6156, or www.usbank.com/powertrack.

Test Procedures and Business Process

In summary, the Power Track software is resident with the shipper(s), carrier(s), and USbank. How does Power Track integrate with the Defense transportation payment process? The CFM shipper generates a bill-of-lading (BOL) and transmits the data to the CFM Host. The CFM Host transmits a rated BOL to Power Track. Following the delivery of the shipment, the carrier is required to provide Power Track with Notification of Delivery—either electronically or telephonically. The notification elevates the shipment to a specific status level in Power Track. Shipment status are viewed regularly by both Government and carrier personnel. Once the shipment is delivered, the shipper and carrier can review the transportation payment amount that Power Track is preparing to pay the carrier. Again, this amount is based on the original rated BOL from CFM. If either party disagrees with the amount, they can notify the other party and reconcile the dispute on-line *prior* to payment. Early resolutions to payment disputes reduces greatly the number of carrier rebuttals, promotes dialogue between the applicable stakeholders, i.e., shippers and carriers, and results in an accurate payment the first time. Once the shipper certifies the shipment for payment, USbank pays the carriers without the need of an invoice. The carrier's costs associated with

processing and managing invoices is dramatically reduced due to this automated payment process. If a change in payment is required following the original payment, the Power Track system generates an Electronic-bill (E-bill) and initiates payment based upon that amount agreed upon between the carrier and shipper. Monthly, USbank summarizes the shipments and payments, stemming from a specific site, and provides the information to the shipper(s)-authorized designee, for review and approval. Upon approval, the shipper forwards the information to the appropriate DFAS payment center, which in turn pays USbank. Therefore, DFAS issues a single payment that reflects numerous shipments. Consequently, carriers are paid in 1-3 days and the carrier and Government resources needed to generate and pay, a number of invoices is greatly reduced.

The PMO CFM has been testing Power Track at SPAWAR, San Diego, CA; DCMC Seattle, and DCMC Cleveland since September 1998. We began testing at Ft Campbell, KY in December 1998. Approximately eleven motor and air carriers are participating in the test. Each participating carrier pays Power Track a percentage of each freight bill. To date, approximately 175 shipments have been generated and on the average, test carriers have successfully received payments between 24-72 hours following delivery. The feedback from both carriers and government users has been very positive. Shippers have indicated that Power Track is extremely user-friendly, and embrace their newly empowered authority to certify payments. Shippers' have requested a larger population of carriers to participate with Power Track. USbank is working the issue. Test carriers' feedback has been very positive as well. They have acknowledged receiving payments between 24-72 hours and, similarly, have found the Power Track system to be very user friendly.

Conclusion

We encourage you to access the CFM website and view the latest information. It is a very functional homepage, i.e.; it is kept up-to-date with the latest CFM News and ETA applications used by Government and industry. The site is accessible through either MTMC homepage www.mtmc.army.mil—click on ETA) or directly to CFM homepage at www.mtmc.army.mil/transsys/cfm. Under "What's New", we have provided

a **Federal Register** Comments Form. Feel free to utilize this form in providing your response to us.

The PMO CFM will host a Carriers Symposium on February 8-10, 1999, in Atlanta, GA. The symposium is intended to provide commercial carriers with the latest status of our web development efforts, provide you with the knowledge and tools needed to use ETA's functions (as applicable), and solicit your feedback to ensure we are moving forward smartly. This educational effort will continue at the 1999 MTMC Symposium to be held at the Adam's Mark hotel in Denver, CO, March 29 through April 1, 1999. Reservations are now being accepted through MTMC's Conference Contractor "Connections" at 404-842-0000. Connections hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM EST. Do not call The Adam's Mark Hotel for reservations, as they will refer you directly to Connections.

In addition, we will be posting a "Playground" on our website for both Government and carrier representative's to access and use. The intent of the playground is to familiarize and train users of ETA on the different CFM applications/functions that either are, or will be, available. Most importantly, it provides users with a platform to provide feedback to the CFM PMO so we can ensure we are programming a system that is aligned with your interests and needs.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

Implementation of this proposed procurement procedure concerning the movement of DOD freight involves public contracts and is exempt from the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601-612. This proposed procurement procedure is not rule making within the meaning of the Administrative Procedure Act or the Regulatory Flexibility Act."

Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3051 *et seq.* does not apply because no information collection requirement or records keeping responsibilities are imposed on offerors, contractors, carriers, or other members of the public.

John Piparato,

Deputy, DCSOPS.

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