NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Action Memo

File #: GF 13-012, **Version:** 1

Eric Olson, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:
Initial Review of Round Island Transit

ESTIMATED TIME:
8 hours (all Groundfish Issues)

ACTION REQUIRED:
Review Draft EA/RIR for Round Island transit analysis, choose Preferred Alternative

BACKGROUND:
This Draft EA/RIR analyzes the potential environmental and economic effects of a proposal to establish season transit areas through the Round Island and Cape Peirce walrus protection areas in northern Bristol Bay, Alaska. The proposed action would establish one or more transit areas through the walrus protection areas at Round Island and Cape Peirce in order to allow vessels with Federal Fisheries Permits (FFPs) to transit through the areas while tendering for State of Alaska managed herring and salmon fisheries in Togiak Bay, Cape Peirce and Cape Newenham, and Security Cove, or while transferring groundfish to floating processors or trampers in Togiak Bay or Hagemeister Strait. Before implementation of Component 10 to GOA FMP Amendment 83, vessels with FFPs were allowed to surrender their FFP for the tendering season in order to transit through the walrus protection area, with the expectation that they could reactivate their FFP when tendering was completed. Now those vessels are prohibited from reapplying for a FFP within a three year period, putting their FFP at risk or putting themselves at risk of violating regulations if they transit the walrus protection area. The purpose of this action is to maintain suitable protection for walrus on Round Island and Cape Peirce, to restore access to routes used by tendering vessels before implementation of GOA FMP Amendment 83, and to allow vessels delivering groundfish to the route north of Round Island to reduce the likelihood of disturbance to walrus on Hagemeister Island.

At this meeting, the Council will review the Draft EA/RIR and select one or more alternatives for review in the final EA/RIR/IRFA which was mailed to you on 11/4/2013. The Executive Summary is attached as **Item C-2(a)**.