

Discussion of Council Funding Support for Southeast Regional Office Permit Software

Additional information on permit system software provided by Andrew Strelcheck, Acting Regional Administrator, Southeast Regional Office

Benefits of the new system:

- The new system will streamline and modernize the permitting system to improve internal and external efficiency, enhance service delivery and transparency to the Public of the Federal fishing permits process.
- The new system will be fully electronic, greatly reducing the amount of printing and mailing in the process and improving the customer experience.
- The current system resides in the SERO leased office space in St. Petersburg, Florida, in a storm surge floodplain. The new system will be hosted in a cloud vendor located outside of the floodplain, improving continuity of operations during hurricanes, pandemics, and other emergencies.
- System enhancements will improve enforcement and compliance with Permitting as well as improve data collection for fisheries management.
- The success of this project is also tied to the eventual phase-out of the current NMFS National Permits System (PIRO, WCR, and High Seas). SERO has engaged extensively with other NMFS offices. The new system will improve data sharing capabilities, especially other permitting offices along the Eastern seaboard.
- The system takes advantage of Appian technology already in use for other NMFS software applications, which will further enable consolidation of hosting and cost reduction through the utilization of common platforms.
- Unlike the National Permits System, the Appian technology allows for regional control of the application itself to meet Regional permitting requirements. Changes will be quicker and easier to maintain since Appian is a commercially available off the shelf (COTS) product. The cost to maintain the final product is affordable for the Southeast Region and will create business process efficiency expected to reduce the permitting transaction time for permit holders.

Project deliverables:

- The ability to submit all Southeast Region applications and forms, along with all application request types (i.e. renewal, transfer, new, duplicate, etc.)
- The ability to email approved open access vessel, dealer, and operator permits.
- An offline version of PIMS that is accessible by constituents and law enforcement when a network connection is unavailable. (i.e. out on the water) - (Phase 2)
- A data connection with NOAA headquarters to pull US Coast Guard vessel documentation information. (Phase 2)
- A data connection with NOAA Office of Law Enforcement - Vessel Monitoring System office to streamline the approval process for Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit holders who require an active VMS unit.
- A data connection with HMS & Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office to improve customer service for vessels who have permits from the different offices. (Phase 3)

- The ability for a public user to delete uploaded documents from their account.
- The ability for a public user to view previously submitted applications.
- Multiple user ids for a single public user with the same email address.
- The ability for a single user with multiple accounts to merge them into one account. This will allow a single account the ability to manage multiple entities & vessels.
- The ability for a public user to update their account information.
- The ability to download permit requests from the public user's online account.
- The development of a beta and build environment for local testing.
- A training plan details the approach to train the public and internal system users.
- The ability to email permit renewal and termination reminders.