

The Alaska Region is proposing to terminate the Alaska Marine Table, broadcast over NOJ Kodiak, Alaska HF radio fax (marine fax), on December 1, 2008.

Justification for Proposed Termination: The Alaska Marine Table product originated decades ago when ship-shore communication links were much less sophisticated. The Table provides a one page summary of anticipated weather conditions forecast to occur at 00 Zulu and 12 Zulu (00Z and 12Z) hours. Alaska US Coast Guard rescue crews and mariners using HF radio fax were the intended audience. Over the many years since the product's inception, communication technologies have dramatically improved. Alaska mariners have a variety of means to retrieve forecast and warning information in formats and detail far superior to the Marine Table, thus making this product obsolete. Over the past two years the NWS has conducted outreach to gauge the use of this legacy product and has not been able to find a single user. Most mariners, including USCG rescue crews (the primary intended audience), were unaware of its existence.

Since there is no capacity to provide the highest impact information to the mariner, the NWS Alaska Region considers the lack of detail in the Marine Table potentially misleading. Forecast information is limited to conditions expected at 00Z and 12Z with no mention of possibly worse conditions during the hours in between. Additionally, the product is neither amended nor updated. The Marine Table can therefore provide erroneous information, and be a source of confusion when the Table is inconsistent with other marine forecast products (both text and gridded).

Available Alternatives: Mariners enjoy many new options in addition to the traditional forms of marine dissemination still available (i.e. NOAA Weather Radio, Alaska HF & VHF Marine Broadcasts, Marine Fax Charts). Such new options include direct access to WSO Valdez through satellite telephone communications. Satellite communications have also made FTP Mail forecasts possible and more affordable as requested text products are disseminated through low bandwidth email messages. On larger vessels, direct internet connections are becoming more frequent. Information from these sources is far superior to that provided in the Marine Table.

The NWS will accept comments on the proposed termination of this product through Friday, October 10, 2008. Comments should be submitted through the following email address: nws.ar.pafc.webauthors@noaa.gov, or in writing to the contact listed below. The target date for final decision is October 15, 2008 with the earliest possible termination date being December 1, 2008. If you have any questions about this proposed termination please contact:

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