



New England Fishery Management Council

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E.F. "Terry" Stockwell, Chairman | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 25, 2014
TO: Groundfish Advisory Panel (GAP)
FROM: Frank Blount, Groundfish Oversight Committee (OSC) Chairman
SUBJECT: GAP meeting on Tuesday, April 1, 2014

There will be a Groundfish Advisory Panel meeting at the Sheraton Colonial Hotel in Wakefield, MA on **Tuesday, April 1st starting at 10:00 AM.**

Purpose. The main purpose of the GAP meeting is to discuss Amendment 18 (A18), an amendment to address fleet diversity and accumulation limits in the commercial groundfish fishery, to the Northeast Multispecies fishery management plan (FMP). Additionally, Framework Adjustment 52 (FW52), a narrow and focused action to revise commercial groundfish fishery accountability measures (AMs) for Southern and Northern windowpane flounder stocks, will be discussed.

Meeting Materials. Paper copies of the documents listed below will be provided at the meeting. A PDF of each document is posted to www.nefmc.org. Staff will provide copies of any additional meeting materials that are not included in this package. If you have any questions about the documents, please contact Jamie Cournane (jcournane@nefmc.org; 978-465-0492 ext. 103) or Rachel Feeney (rfeeney@nefmc.org; 978-465-0492 ext. 110).

1. Meeting memo (this document)
2. Agenda
3. 3a. PDT memo, regarding A18, dated March 21, 2014
3b. PDT memo, regarding A18 – accumulation limits, dated March 25, 2014
4. Amendment 18 Discussion Document, dated March 25, 2014
5. PDT memo, regarding FW52, dated March 24, 2014
6. Recent GAP meeting summaries, for background on past A18 discussions
 - 6a. GAP meeting summary, September 16, 2013
 - 6b. GAP meeting summary, June 10, 2013
 - 6c. Joint OSC/GAP meeting summary, March 6, 2013
 - 6d. GAP meeting summary, October 4, 2012
7. GF OSC meeting summary, January 23, 2014
8. GF OSC meeting motions, March 28, 2014 (to be provided)

Amendment 18

Recent activity. The Committee and Council met in January 2014 to discuss an update on A18 development and tasked the Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT) with additional analysis. Since that meeting, the PDT has met several times to discuss progress on tasks and further develop draft alternatives for A18. Please refer to the PDT memo on Amendment 18 (Document 3), which provides discussion on the draft measures for A18 (Document 4). In addition, the Committee will be meeting on March 28 and a copy of the meeting motions will be brought to the GAP meeting (Document 8).

Next steps. Council staff will provide an overview presentation to review PDT progress on analysis with respect to A18 including an examination of: accumulation limits; permit banks; permit holdings data; United States/Canada quota trading for Eastern Georges Bank (EGB) cod, EGB haddock, and Georges Bank yellowtail flounder; Handgear A fishery proposal; and recent spatial and temporal trends in fishing effort and biology of Gulf of Maine cod. In addition, staff will provide a summary of the OSC discussion.

After opportunities for discussion and feedback, the GAP will make recommendations to the OSC on A18. To make the most of our meeting time on **April 1st**, you are encouraged to prepare motions in advance and either bring them to the meeting or send them to Rachel Feeney (rfeeney@nefmc.org).

Framework Adjustment 52

Recent activity. The Council initiated FW 52 at its February 2014 meeting. The purpose of FW52 is to revise accountability measures (AMs) for the commercial groundfish fishery for southern and northern windowpane flounder stocks. The current AMs were triggered for FY 2014 due to overages of the overall annual catch limit (ACL) in FY 2012 for both windowpane stocks. The Council requested that any revision to the current AMs be applied retroactive to FY 2014, or any overages that occurred prior to FY 2014. This would not only mitigate overages that have already occurred, but would better ensure that additional overages do not occur in FY 2014.

Next steps. Since the Council meeting, the PDT has met several times to discuss Framework Adjustment 52. Please refer to the PDT memo on FW52 (Document 5), which provides background information on recent windowpane flounder catches and discards and additional information from trawl surveys.

After opportunities for questions and feedback, the GAP will discuss FW52. To make the most of our meeting time on **April 1st**, you are encouraged to prepare motions in advance and either bring them to the meeting or send them to Jamie Cournane (jcournane@nefmc.org).

Georges Bank Yellowtail Flounder Benchmark Assessment

The GAP will receive an update from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center on progress for the empirical benchmark assessment for Georges Bank yellowtail flounder. The assessment is scheduled for April 14-18, 2014 in Woods Hole, MA. The GAP will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the upcoming assessment and provide feedback.