



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2015

TO: Groundfish Committee

FROM: Frank Blount, Groundfish Committee Chairman

SUBJECT: Groundfish Committee meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2015

There will be a Groundfish Committee meeting at the DoubleTree by Hilton, South Portland, ME on **Thursday, March 26, starting at 9:00 AM.**

Purpose. The purpose of the Committee meeting is to continue development of Amendment 18 (A18), an action to consider accumulation limits and fleet diversity in the Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) fishery management plan (FMP). The Committee will also discuss groundfish priorities for 2015 and other business as necessary.

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. Council's Groundfish Priorities for 2015 Presentation
4. A18 Action Plan version 16, March 17, 2015
5. PDT memo to Committee re A18, March 18, 2015
6. A18 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, March 18, 2015
 - a. Biological impacts section, March 22, 2015
7. A18 Groundfish Committee Decision Document, March 19, 2015
8. A18 Presentation (to be provided)
9. Inshore/Offshore Sub-ACLs for Gulf of Maine cod Presentation (to be provided)
10. Groundfish Advisory Panel meeting summary, September 16, 2014
11. Recreational Advisory Panel meeting summary, September 16, 2014
12. Groundfish Committee meeting summary, September 17-18, 2014 (*draft*)
13. Groundfish Committee meeting summary, November 12-13, 2014 (*draft*)
14. Recreational Advisory Panel meeting summary, January 22, 2015
15. Groundfish Advisory Panel meeting motions, March 25, 2015 (*draft*, to be provided)
16. Correspondence

Council's Groundfish Priorities for 2015

Next Steps. Council staff will provide an overview presentation (Document #3) of the Council's groundfish priorities for 2015 (see table below).

<u>2015 Groundfish Priorities</u>	
<u>Annual</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set specifications for all groundfish stocks 2016-2018• Set specifications for United States/Canada stocks for 2016• Recreational measures management process• Staff: Five year sector review• Staff: TMGC/TRAC• Staff: Operational/update assessments• Staff: Discussion paper on management alternative for windowpane flounder• Staff: Coordinate with Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Lobster Technical Committee on lobster trap bycatch of groundfish species
<u>Multi-Year</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to coordinate action on the Habitat Omnibus Amendment 2 to include possible modifications of the Groundfish closed areas• Complete Amendment 18 to consider fleet diversity and accumulations caps• Develop alternative strategies for setting catch advice for stability in annual catch limits (ACLs)• Process for review of groundfish catch in other fisheries• Staff: Cod Stock Structure Workshop
<u>Other</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electronic Monitoring Working Group (reports to the Council)

Amendment 18

Recent activity. The Council selected the range of alternatives for this action at its November 2014 meeting. Since the Council meeting, the PDT has met on February 19 and March 10 to further develop analyses for the Committee to consider in the DEIS (Documents 5, 6, and 9).

Next steps. On March 26, we will receive a summary of input from the GAP Chair regarding the GAP meeting the day prior to the Committee meeting (Document 15). After a Council staff overview of the DEIS and recent PDT discussion (Documents 4-9), and opportunities for questions and feedback, the Committee will discuss A18 and can make recommendations to the Council on preferred alternatives. A decision document has also been provided (Document 7) to facilitate this discussion. To make the most of our meeting time on **March 26th**, you are encouraged to prepare motions in advance and either bring them to the meeting or send them to Rachel Feeney (rfeeney@nefmc.org).

The Council is scheduled to select preferred alternatives and approve the DEIS and for this action at its April 2015 meeting.