

# **New England Fishery Management Council**

## **Advisory Panel Policies**

**Presented to the Habitat Advisory Panel  
May 29, 2026**



**New England  
Fishery Management  
Council**

# NEFMC Advisory Panel Policies

- **Welcome and thank you for serving!**
- *Role:* Support developing or amending an FMP or special issue or problem.
- Your input matters! AP discussions and recommendations are shared with each Fishery Management Plan Committee, and made available to the Council.
- AP recommendations are advisory and are considered alongside other information in Committee and Council decision-making.



- Membership:

- 1) Actively engaged in some aspect of commercial or recreational fisheries.

- 2) Knowledgeable in the conservation and management of a fishery.

- To the extent possible, membership shall reflect broad cross-section of interests and expertise from geographical distribution, user groups, etc.
- The recreational fishing industry shall have at least one seat on the herring and habitat APs.
- Other Councils may be invited to name advisors to serve.



- Organization:

- AP Chair designated by Committee Chair, reviewed by Executive Committee and approved by Council Chair.
- AP Chair expected to routinely communicate meeting results to relevant committee.
- *AP Chair will be seated at the Committee table. They may not vote but can freely enter the discussion. AP Chairs must identify comments as “discussed by the AP” or “personal input”. AP Chairs must leave committee table when providing personal comments.*
- A vice-Chair can be designated but is not required. The vice-Chair may be authorized to attend committee meetings in place of the AP Chair with advance approval of the Executive Director.

- Commitment:

- Number of meetings varies by panel and year – range of 0-5 per year.
- Meeting may be conducted in-person or by webinar.
- If an in-person meeting is scheduled, we ask that you plan to come to the meeting in-person. The Council provides travel reimbursement (following slide).



- Appointments:
  - After three years performance and attendance will be reviewed. If needed, new members will be solicited to fill any vacancies.
  - All members must apply for re-appointment at the end of each 3-year term.
  - Neither proxies nor designees shall serve in place of appointed advisor.
  - Prior to selection, nominees are subject to additional level of review by NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement.
- Termination: The Council *may* replace an AP members at its discretion if he/she:
  - 1) transfers employment or moves;
  - 2) absent for two or more consecutive meetings without adequate notification;
  - 3) appears unable or unwilling to fulfill obligations;
  - 4) area of expertise no longer required; or
  - 5) for just cause (e.g., marine violation, failure to show respect for other panel members, disruptive behavior, etc.).



- *Travel Authorization and Reimbursement:*

- Eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses incurred while attending authorized meetings (e.g. mileage, hotel overnight, meals, etc.), subject to availability of funds.
- Reimbursed from APs primary residence, as reflected on application.
- To qualify for overnight lodging, your travel distance must be over 50 miles or requires you be available before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m.
- Additional guidance found in [Operations Handbook pages 38-41](#).
- Questions on travel? Contact us before travel takes place.

- *Meal Reimbursement:*

- The Council will reimburse you for the actual cost of meals, including gratuity. Alcohol is not a reimbursable expense. You do not need to submit receipts for your meals.



# Meeting Planning and Preparation

## What to expect:

- Staff may send poll by email before a meeting to identify possible meeting dates, and sometimes a date will just be selected by the Committee Chair.
- Prior to a meeting staff will email memo from Chair with meeting purpose. Monitor your emails from staff and check website frequently.
- The Council has gone paperless – all meeting materials will be sent to you electronically. If you plan to review materials during the meeting, it is suggested that you bring a device that can connect to the internet.
- To the extent possible, come prepared with draft motions and discussion points.



# Meeting Ground Rules

- Come to every meeting prepared, when possible, review documents from staff before arriving at the meeting.
- Follow the agenda as managed by the Chair (i.e. stay on topic).
- Participate in the discussion! You are here for a reason – share your knowledge.
- Listen respectfully to the comments of others; give other opinions honest consideration.
- Be open to points of view that may differ from your own.
- Discuss the issues – avoid personal attacks.
- Avoid profane language.
- Sustain a professional meeting environment before, during and after meetings.



# Behaviors that are unacceptable

- Ridicule of another person's opinions or suggestions.
- Threats aimed at anyone.  
(Council/AP/PDT member, staff, public).
- Harassment.
- Discrimination.



# Unlawful Harassment

- NOAA and the Councils are committed to ensuring a safe working environment for everyone involved in Council process.
- Two model policies adopted by the Council:
  - Council staff policy
  - Council process participant policy
- Policies incorporated into the Council SOPP



# Unlawful Harassment

- Based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, older age (beginning at age 40), disability, or genetic information (including family medical history).
- Unlawful when:
  - Condition of employment
  - Severe or pervasive enough create an intimidating, hostile, or abusive environment



- **The Council will not tolerate harassment or retaliation against those who report harassment.**
- Preventing harassment is everyone's responsibility and individuals who experience or observe harassment are strongly encouraged to come forward to ensure a safe working environment for everyone involved in the Council process.
- Council Process Participants who observe or are subject to harassment by any Council member, Council employee, or other Council Process Participants may report incidents in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:
  - The Council Executive Director;
  - The Council chair or vice-chair;
  - Appropriate law enforcement authorities, as needed.



# Key Policy Elements

- All participants have responsibility to prevent harassment in the Council process
- Those subject to harassment, or observing it, should report it as soon as possible
- The Council should conduct an inquiry
- Appropriate action should be taken after inquiry
- Participants identified in the policies are required to take periodic training



# Key Policy Elements (cont.)

- Reports can be made to Chair, Vice-Chair, Executive Director, or others (employee's supervisor, for example)
- Executive Director responsible for initiating inquiry
- Time limits for response
- Federal/state employees can report within their own organization.



# Future Action

- Policies are currently included in SOPP as appendices
- Periodic briefings of Council/SSC/AP/Staff on policy will be provided
- Required training for Council members, SSC, staff, and some AP members



# Thank you!

- The Council appreciates your time and effort.
- Your participation is a critical step in this overall process.
- Your input is important and valuable.
- We look forward to working with you.
- Any questions, contact our staff anytime.

(978) 465-0492

Council Operations Handbook

Located here: <https://www.nefmc.org/about>



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