



## New England Fishery Management Council

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Daniel Salerno, *Chair* | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, *Executive Director*

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 27, 2026

**TO:** Risk Policy Working Group

**FROM:** Megan Ware, Risk Policy Working Group Chair

**SUBJECT:** Purpose for Risk Policy Working Group meetings on June 3, 2026

The Council will be holding a Risk Policy Working Group (RPWG) meeting on June 3, 2026 by webinar. Documents for this meeting will be posted to a Sharefile site and then the Council's website as they become available. You will receive a link to access files ahead of the meeting.

**Purpose:** The main objectives of the meeting are to:

- 1) Review the Risk Policy Concept and Appendices, and finalize recommendations on specific items related to scoring, weighting, and qualitative interpretation of outputs. This includes reviewing the Risk Policy Concept and Appendices, as well as providing recommendations on a new Risk Policy Use guidance document.
- 2) Review the status of the Risk Policy Toolkit and provide feedback.
- 3) Receive an update on completion of the Risk Policy TORs, Risk Policy Working Group, and next steps.
- 4) Discuss other business.

**Webinar:** Register before the meeting begins using the following link. You will receive an email with login information after registering.

<https://nefmc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/k9dzsxYqTcy-OwOgDAaZQQ>

1. **Participating in the meeting via webinar:** To participate, you **MUST** register for the meeting. If you do not register, staff will not be able unmute you.

Questions about presentations will be entertained before taking comments. The Working Group will have the first opportunity to weigh-in, followed by the public. Individuals interested in speaking should raise their hand on the webinar.

2. **Developing Recommendations:** The working group should strive to reach consensus when making recommendations.

## **MEETING MATERIALS**

1. Agenda
2. Meeting Memo
3. Presentations (*to be provided*)
4. Risk Policy Workplan
5. Risk Policy Concept
  - a. Appendix 1 – Factor Scoring Instructions
  - b. Appendix 2 – Factor Weighting Sheet and Instructions
  - c. Appendix 3 – Risk Policy Mechanics
  - d. Appendix 4 – Risk Policy Decision Catalogue
6. Draft Risk Policy Use Guidance Document
7. 260527 Memo from Dr. Cate O'Keefe to RPWG
8. Meetings Summaries
9. Correspondence

**Other Background Materials:** [Risk Policy Working Group Page](#)

### **Risk Policy Concept, Scoring, and Weighting**

At this meeting, the RPWG will focus on reviewing the Risk Policy Concept and appendices that provide details about scoring, weighing, mechanics, and a decision catalogue that tracks areas of potential future work. The Working Group has recommended several revisions to the Risk Policy Concept in 2026 that were presented to the Council at its January and April meetings. The Working Group will continue to build on this work and have additional areas to weigh in on before the Council reviews and approves the Risk Policy Concept in June 2026.

### **Anticipated Outcomes/Decision:**

1. Scoring Factors:
  - a. Scoring Methods: Use a quantile approach for scoring (same as recruitment factor) versus developing a separate criteria for interpreting trends in survey data for model-free/empirical situations. Rationale is to have consistency in scoring methods.
  - b. Commercial Fishery Characterization data inputs: Confirm questions and data streams for use in 2026.
  - c. Recreational Fishery Characterization data inputs: Confirm questions and data streams for use in 2026.
  - d. Confirm the guidance provided on scoring in Appendix I.
2. Weighting Factors:
  - a. Confirm the number of times a factor can be weighed as critically important. When there were 7 factors, Council members could weight up to three factors as “critically important.” Now that there are five factors, staff recommend limiting the number of factors that can be weighted as “critically important” to two. This would maintain the same ratio of ~40% of the factors can be rated as critically important.
  - b. Confirm the guidance provided on weighting in Appendix II and Appendix III.

## **Risk Policy Use**

The short-term application of the Risk Policy will focus on qualitative use, which integration with ABC Control Rules will be considered as part of the development of Groundfish Framework 68. The Working Group will consider how to translate scores and weights into management advice using tiers. Staff have drafted a Risk Policy use guidance document that is designed to help the Council bodies as they consider outputs of the Risk Policy.

### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

1. Qualitative Use:
  - a. Recommend the Risk tiers, and the method for determining them. Council staff have provided an option in Document 6 (and Appendix III) that designs Risk tiers around the shape of the Risk Policy curve. The working group should review both documents and be ready to discuss this option for qualitative interpretation of risk tolerance.
  - b. Recommend how to interpret each tier for use in management decisions. Document 6 also includes descriptions of low, intermediate, and high risk tolerance tiers for the working group to review.

## **Risk Policy Toolkit**

Ms. Angelia Miller (Maris Collaborative) has continued to develop an online Risk Policy toolkit that will assist the Council in applying the Risk Policy. She will provide another demonstration to the working group at this meeting.

## **Next Steps**

As indicated in the memorandum to the Working Group from Dr. Cate O'Keefe, the effort to review and ultimately revise the Risk Policy began in early 2023. Now three years later, substantial work has been completed, and the revised Risk Policy is ready to be applied qualitatively in decision making. Dr. O'Keefe's memo indicates that the Working Group will be discontinued after the Council approves the Risk Policy Concept (as early as June 2026). Continued work on the Risk Policy will be identified by the Council through its annual priority setting process, and some updates to data streams can be considered annually. Council staff will provide an overview of this process and next steps to the working group. We will also review plans for the June Council meeting, and recap decisions made on the webinar.

Additional items and issues may be taken up under other business.

Please review all documents before the meeting.

If you have any questions about these enclosures, please contact Jonathon Peros (978-465-0492 ext. 117).