



## New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492  
Daniel Salerno, *Chair* | Cate O'Keefe, PhD, *Executive Director*

April 21, 2026

Mr. Michael Pentony  
Regional Administrator  
NOAA Fishery Service  
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office  
55 Great Republic Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930

Re: MA DMF 2026 Ventless Trap Survey EFP

The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) has no objection to the exempted fishing permit that would enable the continuation of a ventless trap survey by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF). The Council is supportive of the collection of biological data of all catch during the survey. The ventless survey for lobster and Jonah crab captures information about other species of growing regional and New England Council interest, including black sea bass. Black sea bass are increasingly present in both state waters and adjacent federal waters across New England. As such, consistent fishery-independent information on black sea bass collected through this survey provides useful context for understanding species distribution, abundance trends, and ecosystem dynamics in the northern portion of the stock' range.

Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cate O'Keefe". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cate O'Keefe  
Executive Director