



## New England Fishery Management Council

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

April 23, 2026

Mr. Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler  
Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Piñeiro-Soler:

Please accept this letter as the New England Fishery Management Council's (Council) updated response to your request related to Executive Order 14276 *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness* signed by the President on April 17, 2025. The Council did not recommend changes to their [September 30, 2025 identified activities and workplan for Executive Order 14276](#). The Council considered public comments submitted during the December 2025 open comment period, and they confirmed that no changes are necessary.

The Council appreciates this opportunity to highlight progress on previously identified activities and emphasize ongoing efforts in support of Executive Order 14276. Listed below are the identified activities from the Council's September 30, 2025 workplan with updated status and ongoing commitments.

### ***New England Fishery Management Council Recommendations for Executive Order 14276***

#### **1. Council Actions in the NOAA Fisheries Rulemaking Process**

##### 1.1. Northeast Multispecies Framework Adjustment 69

- Framework Adjustment 69 was implemented via rulemaking on March 9, 2026.

##### 1.2. Atlantic Herring 2025-2027 Specifications

- Specifications for Atlantic Herring Fishing Years 2025-2027 were implemented via rulemaking on December 11, 2025.

#### **2. Council Actions Under Development**

##### 2.1. Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment

- The Council prepared a final submission of the Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment, which is currently under review by NMFS for rulemaking.

##### 2.2. Actions to Set Specifications for Monkfish and Skates

- Proposed rules for Skate Specifications for Fishing Years 2026-2028 and Monkfish Framework 17 were published on March 26, 2026 and April 23, 2026, respectively.

##### 2.3. Spiny Dogfish Framework Adjustment for Accountability Measures and Specifications

- Jointly with the Mid-Atlantic, the Councils approved the Spiny Dogfish Framework to adjust Accountability Measures in December 2025, which is currently being drafted for submission to NMFS.

#### 2.4. Sea Scallop Strategic Plan

- The Council approved the Sea Scallop Strategic Plan in December 2025 and is incorporating high priority items in the development of Scallop Framework 42 in 2026.

#### 2.5. Ecosystem Components Evaluation

- The Council is developing a framework to evaluate criteria for identifying Ecosystem Component species and stocks, which will be presented for approval by the Council in June 2026.

#### 2.6. Modernizing Approaches to Governance

- The Council approved a Holistic Strategic Plan in April 2026 and is developing an Implementation Plan to increase organizational and operational performance, in coordination with east coast partner organizations, improve efficiency and effectiveness of management approaches to provide timelier actions, increase public accessibility of information, and reduce burdens on domestic fishing.

### 3. Proposed Council Activities for Executive Order 14276

#### 3.1. Modifications to Vessel Baseline Restrictions

- In collaboration with the Mid-Atlantic Council and Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), the Council is participating in a Working Group to evaluate existing vessel baseline restrictions. A series of meetings for all Advisory Panel members in the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions are scheduled for May 2026, and the evaluation report will be considered by the Council in September 2026 to determine the types of actions needed to reduce vessel baseline constraints.

#### 3.2. Atlantic Herring Slippage Measures

- The Council proposed an evaluation of existing herring slippage measures with potential follow-on actions in 2027.

#### 3.3. Monkfish Management Modifications

- The Council is conducting five “Listening Sessions” in May 2026 to solicit ideas for improvements to the monkfish and skate fisheries. Results from the Listening Sessions will inform priority actions in 2027.

#### 3.4. Revisions to Reactive Accountability Measures

- The Council initiated an assessment of Accountability Measures (AMs) across all Fishery Management Plans and proposed prioritizing action(s) to revise AMs in 2027.

#### 3.5. Fishery Management Plan Revisions

- The Council initiated a review of outdated and irrelevant regulations across Fishery Management Plans and prioritized removal of regulations via upcoming management actions.

#### 3.6. Dogfish Gillnet Exemption Area Modifications

- The Council prioritized an evaluation of existing Northeast Multispecies Exemption Areas for holistic revisions to be conducted in 2027.

### 4. Non-Council Activities for Executive Order 14276

The Council reemphasized support for the following activities:

#### 4.1. Seafood Marketing and Promotion

#### 4.2. Fisheries Monitoring and Scientific Programs

#### 4.3. Recreational Bioeconomic Model

#### 4.4. Changing Environment and Fisheries Initiative

#### 4.5. Categorical Exclusions under the National Environmental Policy Act

Finally, in response to the December 2025 additional public comments, the Council highlighted ongoing commitment to the following topics:

- Use of fishery-dependent data and cooperative research
  - The Council has continually supported the use of fishery-dependent data in management and science products, including stock assessments. The Council will foster ongoing collaboration with regional and national NOAA partners, research organizations, and academic institutions to codevelop and conduct research with the fishing industry.

- Regulation reform
  - The Council’s workplan for Executive Order 14276 includes implementation of the Omnibus Management Flexibility Amendment, evaluation of modifications to vessel baseline restrictions, revisions to fishery management plans to minimize redundancy, revisions to AMs, and application of criteria to define Ecosystem Components. Collectively, these activities align with the objectives of Executive Order 14276 and public input related to reducing regulatory burdens.
- Use of technology
  - The Council is exploring the use of AI and automation, as well as new technology to enhance user accessibility and decision-making processes. As these initiatives progress, the Council will ensure alignment with the objectives of Executive Order 14276.

The Council appreciates the opportunity to confirm our Executive Order 14276 workplan and looks forward to receiving updates from NOAA Fisheries as available. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cate O'Keefe".

Cate O’Keefe  
Executive Director

CC: Mr. Sam Rauch, Ms. Kelly Denit, Mr. Michael Pentony, Dr. Jon Hare, NOAA Fisheries