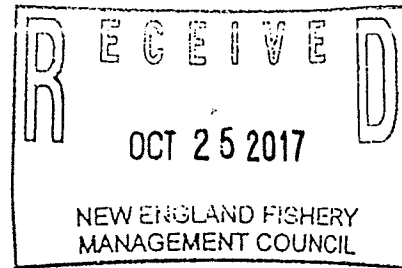


CORRESPONDENCE



Tom Nies
Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Fishery Council
50 Water Street
Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Mr. Nies,

Unfortunately, I am not able to make the Joint Whiting Committee and Advisory Panel Meeting on October 30th which is why I am submitting my comments in writing.

I want to reiterate my support for "No Action" for Whiting Limited Access. I believe that the bycatch issue is what needs to be addressed and that simply reducing the participation is not going to solve that problem. However, if the Limited Access Plan goes through I would like to add that a mesh requirement be implemented for all trips east of 70 degrees. The mesh requirement for a directed whiting trip should be 3 inches or greater, for all tiers, and would be the smallest mesh allowed on board. Regarding the PDT Possession Limit Alternative, I'd like to see equal access for Cat I and Cat II vessels in the Southern management area for the winter and spring.

I am concerned about the consideration of *both* whiting and red hake for the trigger implementation. Because of the history of northern red hake, I think we can safely assume that the Cat II and the Incidental category will often be operating on the reduced limit from the start since the quota for Northern red hake has often exceeded 90%. Again, we are eliminating participants rather than fixing a bycatch problem. There is also no incentive that I see here for the Cat I vessels to avoid and reduce their bycatch since their landings are not reduced in any way.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Katie Almeida
Small Mesh AP Member