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New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., Chairman | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

July 3, 2019

Dr. Jon Hare
Science and Research Director
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NOAA Fisheries
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

Dear Jon:

On June 12, 2019, the Council discussed the draft alternatives in Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring and agreed by consensus to the following:

that the Council write a letter to NEFSC to request observer deployment data at the vessel level for Groundfish trips.

The Council considered several motions related to developing options for coverage levels based on trips of the vessel or time fished by the vessel (e.g. vessel specific coverage rates). Proponents argued that some vessels receive higher levels of observer coverage than other vessels, and that the intent of these options is to provide equitable coverage across all vessels in the groundfish fishery. The Council identified and discussed significant challenges with designing a system based on vessel specific coverage rates, and these motions ultimately did not pass.

Rather, the Council agreed that a first step would be to examine data on observer deployment at the vessel level for groundfish trips, to better understand concerns about differences in coverage rates between vessels. The Council therefore requests that NEFSC provide observer deployment data at the vessel level for groundfish trips (reported for sector and common pool vessels). This information is requested in order to inform the Council of any further interest in considering vessel specific coverage rates as well as coverage rate equity concerns, within the Amendment 23 draft alternatives. Please contact Dr. Jamie Cournane if your staff has questions about this request.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director