

CORRESPONDENCE

From: Jeff Kaelin [<mailto:jkaelin@lundsfish.com>]

Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2019 11:22 AM

To: Deirdre Boelke <dboelke@nefmc.org>; HerringAdvisors <HerringAdvisors@NEFMC.ORG>;
HerringCte <HerringCte@NEFMC.ORG>

Subject: RE: FOR YOUR RECORDS: Groundfish PDT and Herring PDT memos - review of GB haddock sub-ACL in the MWT herring fishery

Thanks for this Deirdre.

It is unfortunate we did not have an opportunity to discuss this pending issue when the AP and Committee met last month.

It also continues to be difficult for us to understand why this AM is again proposed to be triggered at 1-2% of the GB haddock ACL, particularly when the directed groundfish fishery is taking less than 10% of the sub-ACL. The AM for overfished GB yellowtail bycatch in the scallop fishery, for example, is not triggered until the total YT ACL is reached, if I recall correctly; I believe the same is also true for windowpane flounder bycatch in the SNE fluke fishery.

Our company benefits in both of these fisheries from the Council's reasonable approach to the application of AMs for unwanted incidental catch. However, we feel the need to point out, again, the inconsistency of the effect of the proposed haddock AM on the offshore herring fishery's ability to realize OY, which can also have an effect on the fleet's ability to access Atlantic mackerel.

The offshore herring fishery does not want to take haddock and can find juvenile haddock difficult to avoid when found in the water column with herring of similar size. An ongoing GARFO project is reviewing the use of sonar technology to attempt to differentiate these fish, for example, an example of the fleet continuing to work together to avoid haddock. Also, the fishery is already incentivized from taking haddock as, years ago, the fleet and Council agreed that the fish would not be sold.

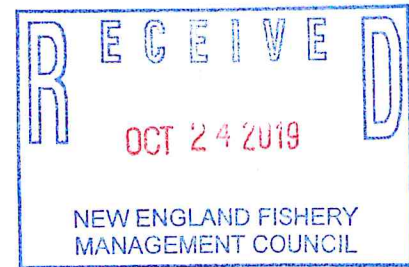
While we certainly appreciate the PDTs' recommending a 2% cap for the coming fishing year, it seems the Council has a long way to go to treat the effect of hard caps and pound-for-pound paybacks consistently and fairly across all fisheries under council management.

With best regards,

Jeff Kaelin
Director of Sustainability
and Government Relations
Lund's Fisheries, Inc.
997 Ocean Drive
Cape May, NJ 08204
C-207-266-0440



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
235 Promenade Street, Room 425
Providence, Rhode Island 02908



October 25, 2019

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

Dear Mr. Pentony,

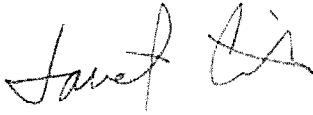
I am writing this letter to confirm the RI Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) support of Amendment 23 (A23) to the New England Fishery Management Council Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. The amendment would implement measures to improve reliability and accountability of catch reporting and ensure a precise and accurate representation of catch as reflected in the amendments purpose and need statement. In the past, the Department has supported the allocation of any surplus funds from those dedicated to the support of the New England on-board observer program to the continuing development of A23.

Fishery managers are struggling to rebuild groundfish stocks, and there is evidence this is at least partially due to insufficient monitoring levels and potential observer bias. This can negatively impact the information needed to adequately manage these fisheries. Discards continue to be an issue that is difficult to characterize through the current monitoring programs, and we believe A23 will improve the documentation of catch (both harvest and discards). RIDEM realizes there are many hurdles facing the industry with regards to enhanced monitoring, but pilot programs using mechanisms like electronic monitoring to enhance the data collected from these fisheries have shown tangible success and received positive feedback and support from the vessels in those programs.

Understanding the two main hurdles of A23, which the groundfish industry perceives as being privacy and cost, the RIDEM is committed to working with industry to insure the timely transition to any enhanced monitoring programs that assuage these two concerns to the extent possible. Council discussions have focused on at-sea observer coverage because it provides the highest quality data; however, its cost to the fishing industry, combined with low quotas in the fishery put participants at a disadvantage, potentially making fishing trips non-profitable. While there will be an upfront cost for things like electronic monitoring, the cost of these types of technologies will certainly decrease over time. Additionally, we support options for fishermen who are uncomfortable with electronic monitoring, as long as these options enhance monitoring.

Specifically, the RIDEM agrees to play a significant role in continued development of A23 through its Council representation and supporting staff at the Division of Marine Fisheries. Throughout the A23 process, there have been numerous delays, and we believe it is time to move this initiative forward so that fishery managers have the best chance of gathering the high-quality information needed to begin to make better progress in restoring our important and iconic groundfish fisheries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janet Coit".

Janet Coit
Director

cc: Tom Nies, NEFMC Executive Director
Eric Reid, NEFMC Vice Chair
Rick Bellavance, NEFMC



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*

October 23, 2019

Ms. Elizabeth Sullivan
Fishery Management Specialist
Sustainable Fisheries Division
NMFS/GARFO
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear Liz:

Sarah Heil has recommended you represent the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office on the Council's Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT). The PDT is currently supporting the Council's work on several management priorities – including Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring and Framework Adjustment 59/Specifications. Your expertise and experience in policy and the scientific and management process will be very valuable to the PDT.

PDT members are expected to contribute to discussion, analysis, and document preparation, often under difficult timelines. I appreciate your willingness to assist in these tasks. Further, PDTs are tasked with providing objective analyses to the Council. For this reason, PDT members are not allowed to address the Committee or Council in order to advocate for any specific Council decisions unless they are presenting a PDT position. This task is normally the responsibility of the PDT Chair.

Jamie Cournane, Groundfish PDT Chair, will be contacting you shortly with more information. Feel free to contact him at your convenience by email (jcournane@nefmc.org) or telephone: 978-465-0492, ext. 103.

I am pleased to appoint you to the Groundfish PDT. Please contact me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

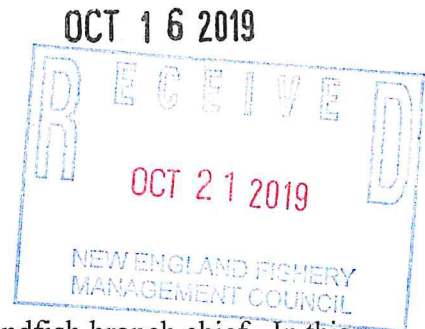
Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director

cc: Sarah Heil, GARFO



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Dr. John F. Quinn, Chairman
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950



Dear John:

I am writing to inform you that Peter Christopher is our new groundfish branch chief. In this role, he will be my delegate to the Council's Groundfish Committee. If you have any questions regarding these changes, please contact Sarah Heil, Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, at (978) 281-9257.

Sincerely,

Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator

cc: Tom Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council





New England Fishery Management Council

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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

October 9, 2019

The Honorable Seth Moulton
United States House of Representatives
Longworth House Office Building
Independence and New Jersey Aves., SE
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Moulton:

Thank-you for your letter of September 5, 2019 that requested an update on the development of Amendment 23 (A23) to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. This amendment is considering alternatives that will improve the At-Sea Monitoring (ASM) program. You asked for our comments on a letter received from the Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC) in early August. The NSC letter is one of several we received on the development of A23. We interpret it as a comment on the development of that action, and note that the NSC intended to discuss their concerns with the Council. The NSC actively participates in our process, with representatives attending all of our Advisory Panel, Committee, and Council meetings. I will address the four specific points raised by the NSC.

At the time the NSC letter was written, the plan for spending the \$10.3 million provided for ASM costs in the FY 2019 appropriations bill was not yet published. This spend plan is developed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), not the Council. In April the Council suggested the appropriation could be used to facilitate development and implementation of the A23 monitoring program. In late May, NMFS agreed that this might be possible. The spend plan was recently released (Attachment 1) and is enclosed for your information.

The NSC asked that A23 include an analysis of the impacts of the under-estimates of stock size on Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and the "observer effect." The fundamental assumption of this request – that ACLs are under-estimated – has not been proven. Indeed, the results of stock assessments completed in September do not support this claim. The Council is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) to use the "best scientific information available." This makes it problematic to include an analysis that is not consistent with the most recent stock assessments. Even if we assume that stock size may be under-estimated, that has not been quantified and determining how that changes the observer effect is uncertain. Including this NSC assumption request in the document would rely heavily on speculation and would be inconsistent with the MSA.

With respect to the NSC request that A23 include a cost-benefit analysis of the monitoring alternatives, this is a part of every management action. I caution, however, that while determining the costs of new monitoring alternatives is relatively simple, establishing the costs of inadequate monitoring or the benefits of improvements is much more difficult. As a result, there is a tendency to rely too much on the parts of the analyses that are easier to determine, such as the costs, while under-valuing the benefits of monitoring improvements. The Council is trying to address this problem by working with a researcher to explore the impacts of inaccurate catch information on stock assessments. The results of that work may not be completed in time for the draft document but should be available for the Council's final decision.

Finally, the NSC asks that the Council develop a plan to use monitoring data to "...enhance stock abundance estimates by focusing on reducing uncertainties in the underlying biomass rather than focusing only on uncertainties in removals (catch)." Biomass estimates are developed using fishery dependent and fishery independent data in assessment models of varying complexity. Developing accurate estimates relies not only on analytic techniques that accurately model biological processes, but on accurate input data. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center is working with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils to improve the performance of the primary fishery-independent data source, the bottom trawl surveys. The other key data source is fishery catch information. During the development of A23, several analyses indicate that fishery dependent data may not be accurate and are biased. The quality of these data need to be improved before they can be expected to reduce uncertainties in the biomass estimates. Unless we have confidence in the accuracy of the catch information, we cannot rely on it to inform biomass estimates.

I hope these responses clarify the work we are doing on Amendment 23. Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Quinn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Quinn" clearly distinguishable.

Dr. John Quinn
Chairman

enclosure

cc: Mr. Michael Pentony, RA, NMFS/GARFO



New England Fishery Management Council

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John F. Quinn, J.D., Ph.D., Chairman | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

October 7, 2019

Mr. Richard Balouskus
Principal Biologist
RI Division of Marine Fisheries
Three Fort Wetherill Road
Jamestown, RI 02835

Dear Rich:

Deputy Chief, Scott Olszewski has recommended you represent Rhode Island Division of Marine Fisheries on the Council's Groundfish Plan Development Team (PDT). The PDT is currently involved in supporting the Groundfish Committee with respect to commercial management issues. Your knowledge of the State of Rhode Island's fisheries and management will be very valuable to the PDT.

PDT members are expected to contribute to discussion, analysis, and document preparation, often under difficult timelines. I appreciate your willingness to assist in these tasks. Further, PDTs are tasked with providing objective analyses to the Council. For this reason, PDT members are not allowed to address the Committee or Council in order to advocate for any specific Council decisions unless they are presenting a PDT position. This task is normally the responsibility of the PDT Chair.

Dr. Jamie Cournane, Groundfish PDT Chair, will be contacting you shortly with more information. Feel free to contact her at your convenience by email (jcournane@nefmc.org) or telephone: 978-465-0492, Ext. 103.

I am pleased to appoint you to the Groundfish PDT. We appreciate your assistance and technical support for the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. Please contact me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director

cc: Scott Olszewski, Deputy Chief, RI DMF

From: Jon Hare - NOAA Federal [<mailto:jon.hare@noaa.gov>]

Sent: Friday, September 20, 2019 3:10 PM

To: Tom Nies

Cc: Michael Pentony; Michael Simpkins; Amanda McCarty - NOAA Federal; Sarah Heil; Jim Weinberg

Subject: FY19 ASM Spend Plan

Dear Tom,

Below is the FY19 ASM Spend Plan. I will include this in the Center report during the Council meeting.

See you next week.

Cheers

Jon

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is providing this spend plan for the \$10.3 million provided within the Observers and Training PPA in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019. For fishing year 2019, based on a 31 percent coverage level, we estimate industry's costs for At-Sea Monitoring (ASM) will be approximately \$2.5 million, and NMFS will reimburse 100 percent to sectors through an existing grant with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. This grant has sufficient funds remaining from FY2018 funds to cover FY2019 costs.

The following outlines the proposed use of the \$10.3 million provided in FY2019. Approximately \$2.7 million will be used for shoreside costs associated with ASM sea days. In addition, \$600,000 is planned for additional ASM training, to cover the surge training and recruitment of ASMs necessary to increase the ASM rate from 16 percent to 31 percent. Approximately \$1.5 million will be used to support efforts to develop Electronic Monitoring (EM) technologies to use in the groundfish fishery. NMFS proposes to use \$4.1 million for future industry support for groundfish monitoring costs. NMFS proposes to use \$700,000 to purchase gear and support analyses involving observer data and discard estimates related to Amendment 23. Finally, \$700,000 is used for NOAA/NMFS Shared Mission Support Costs applied across the budget (e.g. information technology, acquisition and grant administration, general counsel support, and financial management).

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Jon Hare

Science and Research Director

[Northeast Fisheries Science Center](#)

NOAA Fisheries Service

Sherie Goutier

From: Andrea Tomlinson <andrea.csfish@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2019 1:47 PM
To: comments
Cc: Janice Plante
Subject: RE: Dr. John Quinn /Mr. Tom Nies



Dear Dr. Quinn and Mr. Nies,

I would like to submit comment for the upcoming NEFMC meeting. As a participant in the Groundfish Catch Share Program review and an advocate for the formation of a NH Young Fishermen's Alliance (Fishermen and women 45 yrs and younger), I would like to comment on the financial obstacles that the Catch Share system has presented for young fishermen trying to enter the groundfish industry in NH and throughout New England. The implementation of highly priced permits with attached quotas has greatly reduced the ability for entry level Captains, with ample experience in the fishing industry, to move from deckhand to Captain. In the wake of a time where very few fishing Captains, upon retirement, are no longer being replaced by their offspring, as was typical in our fishing industry in the past, this dilemma is evident when considering the survival of our New England Groundfishing industry. The costs of a low priced qualifying permit, not to mention higher valued permits, often valued over \$200,000, are greatly restricting many young fishermen throughout New England to continue our fishing tradition, as our Captains continue to "gray out", a national phenomena know as "the graying of the fleet".

What can the NEFMC do to alleviate the restrictive costs of open access Groundfish permits for young fishermen who find themselves unable to afford such permits, yet want to start a business of their own?

Has the NEFMC considered any relief or subsidy programs for young fishermen in their Council Priorities for 2020? If not, would the Council be willing to consider such measures as a means of continuing to develop and support our struggling New England groundfishing industry?

Thank you for your time, I look forward to the comments portion of the meeting.

All the best,

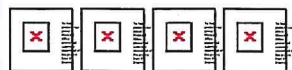


Andrea Tomlinson

Manager, NH Community Seafood

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w: www.nhcommunityseafood.com



jc / RF 9/19/19

