



## New England Fishery Management Council

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

### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 7, 2025  
**TO:** Executive Committee  
**FROM:** Executive Director, Cate O'Keefe  
**SUBJECT:** Enforcement Committee

#### **BACKGROUND**

As described on the Council's website, the Enforcement/VMS Committee is a standing committee of the Council that meets as needed to review and comment on the enforceability of management measures proposed by other committees and discuss general enforcement policies and priorities. The committee has included representatives from the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), NOAA General Counsel (NOAA GC), and state marine enforcement agencies, as well as Council members.

At the September 4, 2024 meeting, the Executive Committee discussed challenges with the existing Enforcement Committee structure and recommended reconsideration of the Advisory Panel and Committee structure as a 2025 work priority. Specific issues included low attendance, changing USCG assignments, confusion around how the Committee can consider confidential information in a public meeting setting, and lack of clarity about the AP's role.

The Enforcement Committee met on November 18, 2024, to provide input to the development of recommendations related to the On-Demand Gear Conflict Working Group's Terms of Reference. In early 2025, the Enforcement Committee Chair retired, and committee activities were paused pending review by the Executive Committee.

#### **REENGAGING THE ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee is requested to consider options for reengaging the Enforcement Committee, including:

1. Membership
  - a. Option A: Representatives from NOAA OLE, USCG, NOAA GC, marine enforcement from each of the five New England states
  - b. Option B: Same as above, plus 1-2 Council members (e.g., Executive Committee members)
2. Advisory Panel
  - a. Option A: Dissolve the AP
  - b. Option B: Membership to include non-enforcement representatives with clearly defined role
3. Format and logistics
  - a. Option A: Meetings on a need-only basis
  - b. Option B: Standing annual meetings with additional need-based meetings

Recommendations will be presented to the Council at their December 2025 meeting and outcomes will be incorporated in 2026 work priorities. The Enforcement Committee is expected to be repopulated in January 2026 with a possible meeting in the spring of 2026.

Current Committee Members:

- Michael Henry (NOAA OLE Rep)
- Capt. Clint Pringle (USCG Rep)
- Major Robert Beal (ME State Rep)
- Major Chris Baker (MA State Rep)

Current AP Members:

- LCMR Lennie Day (USCG Rep)
- Lt. Delayne Brown (NH State Rep)
- Sgt. Jeff Mercer (RI State Rep)
- Capt. Keith Williams (CT State Rep)
- Kirby Aarsheim
- Todd Bragdon
- William Dunlap
- John Whiteside

Other Participants:

- Mitch MacDonald (NOAA GC)
- Katie Pohl (NOAA GC)
- Sam Duggan (NOAA GC)
- Caleb Gilbert (NOAA OLE)