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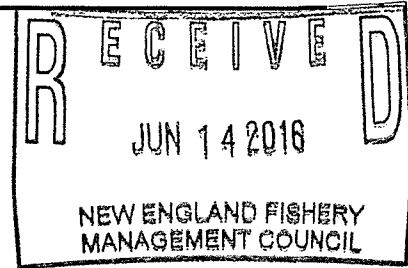
CORRESPONDENCE

ASSOCIATED FISHERIES OF MAINE

PO BOX 287, SOUTH BERWICK, ME 03908

June 14, 2016

Mr. Mark Gibson, Chair
Small Mesh Multispecies Committee
New England Fishery Management Council



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Mark:

The Associated Fisheries of Maine urges the Committee and the Council to suspend development of the limited access program in the whiting fishery, and to instead focus efforts on solving the bycatch problems, removing trip limits, and exploring opportunities to expand participation (particularly in the northern management area) to increase landings of the resource consistent with the annual catch limit.

The health of the whiting fishery, combined with the significant gap between catch and the annual catch limit, provides the Council the rare opportunity to increase seafood production and fishery related jobs. Understanding that this opportunity also comes with bycatch challenges, we believe the Council can increase participation in a controlled way that will not negatively impact the fishery.

As always, we appreciate your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

M. Raymond

Maggie Raymond
Executive Director