



New England Fishery Management Council

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 E. F. "Terry" Stockwell III, *Chairman* | Thomas A. Nies, *Executive Director*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DRAFT
TO: Council
FROM: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Summary of April 20, 2015 Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee met on April 20, 2015 at the Mystic Hilton, Mystic, CT. Executive Committee members attending were Mr. Stockwell, Mr. Quinn, Mr. Grout, and Mr. Kendall. Also attending were Mr. Nies, Mr. Bullard, Mr. Pentony and Mr. Kellogg. The committee discussed the agenda items below.

1. Executive Director's Report

Budget Overview – Mr. Nies reported that the Council's 2015 award would be marginally more than its 2014 award amount; however, without any carryover from previous years the Council will have substantially less funds than total available in 2014 but about the same as for 2013. As a result, Mr. Nies explained that the Council had adequate resources to meet its priorities but that it should be cautious about spending until it had a clearer picture of anticipated expenses for the current year.

Collaborative Research and Catch Advice RFP Updates - Mr. Kellogg reported that the collaborative research project's contractor project had identified three projects for possible funding following the second RFP, which sought proposals to increase the understanding of groundfish spawning. The additional projects would be funded with resources not awarded under the first RFP and the additional funds the Council added since that time. The contractor was still in the process of communicating with the principal investigators for these projects and therefore was not yet able to identify which projects had been selected.

Mr. Nies commented that he had recently spoken with Dr. Wiedenman about the research project to explore alternatives for providing the Council with catch advice for groundfish. Dr. Wiedenman expects to work on it full time for the next seven months. As part of the project, he will identify 5 or 6 stocks for case studies that will be explored in detail in later phases. The RFP suggested the stocks would represent a range of suspected problems: uncertain M, large retro pattern, sensitivity to climate change, etc. but there may be other factors to consider: type of assessment, for example.

September 2016 Council meeting dates - Mr. Nies explained that the September 2016 Council meeting would be scheduled for September 20-22 which would conflict with the NAFO annual meeting but that this was necessary to be able to complete a number of Council actions in time for the beginning of the relevant fishing years. Mr. Bullard commented that as a U.S.

representative to NAFO, he would have a conflict with the Council meeting as would Gene Martin.

Review process for draft CCC position on incorporating NEPA into the MSA and the Draft Cooperative Research and Cooperative Management White Paper – Mr. Nies explained that the Council Coordinating Committee would review these documents in the week following the Council meeting. The Executive Committee agreed it could review comments provided by Council members on these documents at the June Executive Committee meeting and the Council would be able to provide input at the June Council meeting.

2. Management action timelines

Mr. Kellogg briefly reviewed the timelines for ongoing actions and explained that there were no major changes; however the timeline for the Habitat Omnibus amendment was somewhat optimistic assuming the Council took final action at the April meeting.

3. Process for review of draft changes to the National Standard Guidelines

Mr. Nies explained that comments on the guidelines were due soon after the June Council meeting. The Executive Committee agreed it could review draft comments from the SSC, Council members and the Staff at the June Executive Committee meeting so that the Council would be able to review and approve comments at the June Council meeting.

4. Council meeting planning

Mr. Nies pointed out the Council was scheduled to take final action on the Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 and select preferred alternative and approve the DEIS for Multispecies Amendment 18 at the next day's Council meeting. The Committee agreed that the Chair should limit the time allowed for individual public comments to enable the Council to complete its agenda including these decisions.

5. Observer committee update

Mr. Stockwell explained that the Observer/Policy Committee added an alternative to Industry funded Monitoring Amendment that would require EM/portside monitoring to be developed and that that the MWT fleet would be the priority for developing the EM/portside option.

6. Council Communications Strategy

The Committee was given a draft Communications strategy that was prepared by Ms. Fiorelli and agreed to provide comments on the plan to for further development and discussion at their next meeting.

7. Closed session for SSC appointments

The Executive Committee reviewed applications for SSC membership and developed recommendations for Council consideration.

8. Closed session for AP appointments

The Committee approved the following applicants for Council advisory panels: 1)Whiting: David Goethel; 2) Groundfish: Bonnie Brady; and 3) Recreational Advisory Panel: Michael Pierdinock