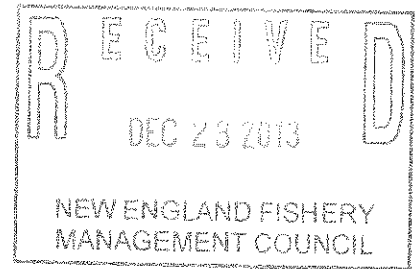


New England Fishery Management Council  
50 Water Street, Mill 2 □ Newburyport, MA 01950 □  
Phone: (978) 465-0492 □ Fax: (978) 465-3116



#### Council Members & Enforcement Committee

I am writing to express my deep concerns about the Enforcements committees' proposal of requiring fishing vessels to tarp net drums when transiting closed areas. This action presents very significant safety hazardous, most working net drums are on the bitter stern of the vessel and 10 to 15 feet above the deck level. Tarring the net drum may require fishermen to climb on top of the net drum to securely tarp to the drum. In severer weather the tarp acts like a parasail and the natural tendency is to grip the tarp so it will not fly away causing a parasailing effect that may result in loss of life if the fisherman flies overboard while holding on to the tarp. As a Coast Guard Approved Marine Safety Instructor I am desperately trying to change the safety culture in the fishing industry. If this proposed regulation is passed and fishermen are required to tarp net drums I fear the worst may happen resulting in a loss of life. The fishing industry is considered to be the most dangerous job in the United States. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health studies show that about 30 percent of loss of life while at sea is due to falls overboard. With todays technology "Vessel Monitoring Systems" this requirement is not needed it will only create an unsafe environment for fishermen to work in, fishing is already a risky business.

I would really like the members New England Fishery Management Council, National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Coast Guard fully think this proposed regulation through before imposing it as a regulation. This regulation will end up in the cause of a death sooner or later. There are other alternatives such a dis-connecting tow cables and attaching an orange Poly ball to the end of the cable so it is visible from an aircraft to determine if the vessel is fishing or not fishing. (You can't be towing a net if the tow cables are not attached to it.)

Regulation like this will do nothing to conserve the fish stocks it will only put fishermen in a dangerous situation. We know we need protection for a healthy fishery but not at the cost of human lives.

Rumor has it that is not the NMFS or the NEFMC that is pushing this regulation it's the U.S. Coast Guard that is pushing for this regulation, if that is the case shame on them they're the agency that should be promoting safety at Sea not promoting a regulation that makes the fishery more dangerous.

If this regulation is passed **SOMEONE WILL DIE** it's only a matter of time.

*a: Cornul, LG (1/2)*

I only hope the council and Enforcement Committee reconsiders this proposed regulation and chooses another alternative and doesn't repeat a regulation like the "**Broken Trip Provision**" in the Scallop Industry which caused some of the crewmembers of the F/V Northern Edge to loss their live while trying to earn a living to support their families.

I regret I can't be at the NEFMC to read this letter into the public record I have to be in MD. On business the day of the meeting but I will ask someone to read it into the record for me.

I ask for a Roll Call vote on this matter.

Can you imagine standing here in a gale of wind with a 10X10 foot tarp in your hand?



Sincerely

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Rodney M. Avila

December 22,2013