



New England Fishery Management Council

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

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan August 6, 2020, 4-6pm Webinar Hearing

The Council held public hearings to solicit comments on the alternatives under consideration in the Draft Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery Management Plan. The amendment will adjust the groundfish monitoring program to improve the accuracy and accountability of catch reporting in the commercial groundfish fishery.

Hearing chairman: Terry Stockwell (Groundfish Committee Chair)

Council staff: Jamie Cournane, Robin Frede, Melissa Errend, Chris Kellogg, and Janice Plante

Attendance: 10 audience members (including two Council members); one commenter

The hearing began at 4:03 pm.

Mr. Stockwell opened the hearing, introduced Council staff in attendance, and commented on the Amendment 23 process. This included updates to the Amendment 23 timeline resulting from recent Council decisions to reschedule final action and schedule additional public hearings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Frede and Ms. Errend briefed the audience on the purpose of the amendment, alternatives under consideration, draft impacts analysis, and amendment timeline and next steps. After an opportunity to ask questions for clarification, public comments were taken on the measures proposed in the amendment. Additionally, of note this hearing was run using a slightly different format – GoToMeeting instead of GoToWebinar – which allowed participants the option of calling in without registering for the webinar.

Questions:

There were no questions.

Comments:

Tory Bramante (Atlantic Coast Seafood, vessel owner, Boston): I would like to comment on a lot of what's in the presentation that was discussed tonight, but there's not enough time for that. But one of the things that really sticks out to me is on pp. 24 [of the public hearing document] about how costs vary across vessels, and I look at the Vessel Profile 3 that says there are boats

stocking \$1.4 million and fishing 160 days at sea. I can tell you that you can probably count on one hand the people that are doing that at 160 days. First of all I am a vessel owner out of Boston. I own three offshore draggers. I am a board member of Sector 6. And I also own Atlantic Coast Seafood which is the primary unloading facility in Boston. I am in tune with some of these numbers, and I beg to differ with what's in the document. I'm not sure where they come from. Going further on that highlight, my boats generally fish in excess of 200 days at sea a year. And when I multiply that out by \$600 or \$650 a day, I'm looking at \$120,000 a year. That is a fleet killer. That is an industry killer. The pot of fishermen that are left now is getting smaller and smaller, and added expense is going to be a fleet killer and an industry killer. I look at it and say, where is the proof that improved monitoring will improve stock assessments? We've been doing it for ten years and the stock assessment models continue to fail. I just don't get what 100% is going to do for us.

I do want to comment on the 100% retention. If someone is looking at 100% retention on paper, maybe they are coming up with some good thoughts. But if you really know what happens and know what it takes to retain everything on board in a multispecies fishery, it's impossible. And I say that for a few reasons, and I'll point out a few out, because I see it firsthand as a dealer and a vessel owner. If you've got guys trying to retain sublegal fish, what are we doing with those fish? Are we gutting them? Are we not gutting them? Are we putting them in a different pen? Are we mixing them in that pen with all the different species in one pen? And I ask that because these days in a multispecies fishery, these current vessels that are in our fleet don't have the space in the fish hold anymore. Now we're going to take up prime real estate, meaning another pen in our boat to throw in sublegal fish. I don't know how that's possible. Who's going to get the fishermen to put these fish down in the fish hold, when they're going shorthanded, with the situation that we have with finding crew? Possibly take another guy with us, to help with that stuff down below, and then you have to pay the lumpers to unload it out of the fish hold. And then you have to put it up on the dock and pay the dock workers to separate it and do something with it, and I don't know what that is. What are we gonna do with them? There is no market for sublegal small fish. Nobody wants to cut them, nobody wants to use them. People start using the word bait. You cannot sell haddock or any of these groundfish whole for bait. There is no market. And I wish some people would take this to the next level instead of looking at this on paper, and see the actuality of what the 100% retention is going to do for us, because all it's going to do is increase costs and expenses. I will put all these comments in writing. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The public hearing closed at approximately 4:55 pm.

**Amendment 23/Groundfish Monitoring
Public Hearing
Webinar**

Audience List

Date	Aug. 6, 2020
Start time	4:03 PM
End time	4:55 PM
Number of participants	10

Groundfish Committee Chair: Terry Stockwell

Council Staff (5): Jamie Cournane, Robin Frede, Melissa Errend, Janice Plante, and Chris Kellogg

Participants (from a roll call following the presentation, since this hearing was run using GoToMeeting instead of GoToWebinar, and attendees had the option to call in without registering)

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation (based on email address)</u>
1	Colleen Coogan	NOAA
	Daniel Salerno	Sector Manager
	George Lapointe	Blue Harvest Fisheries
	Mark Grant	NOAA
	Jeff Taylor	Mayforth Group
	Libby Etrie	NEFMC
	Liz Moore	GMRI
	Stephanie Sykes	Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance
	Terry Alexander	NEFMC
10	Tory Bramante	Vessel Owner, Atlantic Coast Seafood