



New England Fishery Management Council

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PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan Draft Amendment 22 November 14, 2018 Webinar

The Council held a public hearing to accept oral and written comments on the proposed alternatives in Draft Amendment 22. This webinar was conducted during a supplemental comment period that NOAA Fisheries and the Council scheduled to accept additional public comment due to an error in a summary table within the public hearing document. This summary table included a total number of estimated limited access qualifiers that did not reflect the correct data in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Notice of the supplemental comment period was published in the Federal Register, distributed to the Council's interested parties, and posted on the Council website.

The proposed alternatives included five sets of limited access qualification criteria, adjustments to whiting and red hake possession limits, and limited access and incidental permit characteristics. Copies of the Draft Amendment 22 and Draft Environmental Impact Statement were available at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Amendment-22-DEIS-revised.pdf>. In addition a public hearing document that summarized the alternatives were available at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Amendment-22-public-hearing-document-corrected.pdf>. The Council also published a news release that provided information about the public hearings and the proposed alternatives, which was available at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/Whiting-Amendment-22-Comment-Period-Reopens.pdf>.

The webinar began at 3 p.m. and ended at 3:51 p.m.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: Terry Alexander (Chair); Andrew Applegate, Naresh Pradhan, Rachel Feeney, and Janice Plante (Council staff); Cynthia Ferrio and Peter Burns (NOAA Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office), Nicole Lengyel Costa (RI Dept. Environmental Management), David Chosid (MA Division of Marine Fisheries), and Russel & Christine Sherman (Gloucester MA boat owner and fisherman).

Hearing Chair Terry Alexander, the chair of the Small-Mesh Multispecies Committee began the hearing with an introduction, explaining the purpose of the hearing and introducing himself and staff to the webinar participants. He then asked Mr. Applegate to give a presentation about the corrections and the alternatives, as well as answer any technical questions. This video

presentation was broadcast live via the Internet and was available for downloading from the Council's website.

Mr. Applegate explained that an initial analysis of fishing histories was developed in late 2016 and helped guide development of alternatives through March 2017. In April 2017, an error was discovered in the programming that resulted in double counting histories for some vessels. This was related to tracking fishing history for vessels that already have or had limited access permits in other fisheries. Fishing histories for these permits are presumed to transfer with the vessel (not the permit) and are tracked by a 'Moratorium Right ID'. The initial program had tracked these histories incorrectly, some vessels being counted twice from having more than one fishing history associated with it. The error was corrected in April 2017 and the correct information was presented to the Advisory Panel, the Committee, and the Council in June to September 2017, when the range of alternatives and the preferred alternative were approved. At that time, the Council chose No Action as the preferred alternative, which required a restructuring of the document that was approved by the Council in December 2017 and submitted to NOAA Fisheries in early 2018. A summary table of qualifier estimates was not corrected in the final draft document and the wrong summary estimates were also published in the public hearing document. The analysis of impacts in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement had used the correct estimates, however.

Mr. Applegate summarized the recommendations of the Advisory Panel and Committee throughout the process and compared the ranking of alternatives with the initial estimates and the corrected estimates. He also compared these estimates with 2012-2017 fishing data using the most liberal thresholds in the alternatives, expressed as an annual average because the five alternative use qualification periods of differing length.

Comments: Following the presentation, webinar participants were given the opportunity and plenty of time to speak. There were no questions asked or comments offered. Mr. Burns from the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office said that the presentation was clear and thanked the Council for the presentation.

After a satisfactory period, Mr. Alexander closed the webinar hearing at approximately 3:51 p.m.