



New England Fishery Management Council

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

**NOTICE OF ADDITIONAL SCOPING HEARING
AMENDMENT 22 TO THE NORTHEAST SMALL-MESH
MULTISPECIES FISHERY**

The New England Fishery Management Council is conducting an additional public hearing in Warwick, RI to solicit comments on developing Amendment 22 to the Northeast Small-Mesh Multispecies Fishery. Five previous public hearings were held between December 1 and December 21, 2015. The purpose of this action is to implement measures that would prevent unrestrained increases in fishing effort by new entrants to the fishery. The need for the amendment is to reduce the potential for a rapid escalation of the small-mesh multispecies fishery, possibly causing overfishing and having a negative effect on red hake and whiting markets, both outcomes having negative effects on fishery participants.

Through limited access criteria and measures that would apply to qualifying and non-qualifying vessels, the amendment is intended to help ensure that catches of the small-mesh multispecies and other non-target species will be at or below specifications, reducing the potential for causing accountability measures to be triggered and resulting closure of the directed fishery. Three types of measures listed below could be considered. The scoping document includes a list of questions to consider when commenting for each of the following: 1) Limited access qualification criteria that would determine whether vessels may target small-mesh multispecies; 2) Limited access permit characteristics and conditions; and 3) Permit categories and associated measures.

Addressing this purpose and need requires the development of an amendment to the FMP to fully consider and analyze an appropriate range of management alternatives. The Council is seeking comments and input from the public on this specific issue. The hearings are being held by the Council in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Date and Time

Location

<p><u>ADDITIONAL MEETING</u> Warwick, RI Wednesday, January 20, 2016 6:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Hampton Inn & Suites 2100 Post Road Warwick, RI 02886 Telephone: (401) 739-8888</p>
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A scoping document is available on the Council’s website (<http://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/small-mesh-multispecies>) or may be obtained by contacting the Council office at (978) 465-0492.

Members of the public may submit oral and/or written comments at any public hearings or submit written comments directly to the New England Fishery Management Council. The original January 7, 2016 deadline for written comments has been extended to 5 p.m. EST, **Wednesday, January 20, 2015**.

Written comments should be sent to:

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director,
New England Fishery Management Council,
50 Water Street, Mill 2,
Newburyport, MA 01950;
Fax (978) 465-3116.
Email: comments@nefmc.org

Please note on your correspondence; “Small-Mesh Multispecies Amendment 22 Scoping Comments.”

Directions: Please contact the Council office for directions to the above meetings.

cc: Council Members, Whiting IPs, Advisors, PDT members, GF IPs, Advisors and PDT member
Notice date: December 21, 2015