



# New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Whiting Amendment 22 Comment Period Reopens; Council to Host November 14 Informational Webinar

The New England Fishery Management Council has reopened the public comment period on Whiting Amendment 22 and will host an informational webinar on Wednesday, November 14 at 3 p.m. The webinar will cover the amendment's proposed alternatives, as well as pertinent information in the accompanying Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Written comments are welcome until November 23, 2018.

The Whiting Amendment – officially called Amendment 22 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan – proposes to limit access to the small-mesh multispecies fishery. The five impacted stocks are northern silver hake, southern silver hake, and offshore hake, which collectively are referred to as whiting, and northern and southern red hake. The draft amendment contains three sections, which cover:

- Limited access qualification criteria;
- Whiting and red hake possession limits by permit type; and
- Permit conditions, which would apply *only* if the Council decides to approve a limited access program.

On November 14<sup>th</sup>  
at 3 p.m.  
Join the Webinar  
[HERE](#)

### Questions and Answers

**Q:** Why is the Council reopening the public comment period?

**A:** In July, the Council held five public hearings on Amendment 22 and collected both oral and written testimony. Visit [hearing summaries](#) and [written comments](#) to find out what people said at that time. Subsequently, the Council discovered a discrepancy between the number of estimated qualifying vessels cited in the DEIS and in the public hearing document itself. The



*"King" whiting, ready for shipment out of Montauk, NY. – Paul Farnham photo*



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DEIS contains the correct numbers. Those numbers are *lower* than the ones that were listed in the original public hearing document.

In order to prevent any potential misunderstanding, the Council elected to reopen the public comment period and hold an informational webinar to explain the discrepancy and collect additional input. Fishermen and others with a stake or interest in Amendment 22 are encouraged to participate in the webinar.

**Q:** Even though I submitted comments in July, can I change my position in light of the corrected information?

**A:** Yes. Anyone who wishes to provide new comments either orally during the November 14 webinar or in writing prior to the 5 p.m. deadline on November 23 is welcome to do so. The Council will consider all public comments before making final decisions at its December 4-6 meeting in Newport, Rhode Island.

**At Right: Estimated Qualifying Vessels, Annual Landings.**

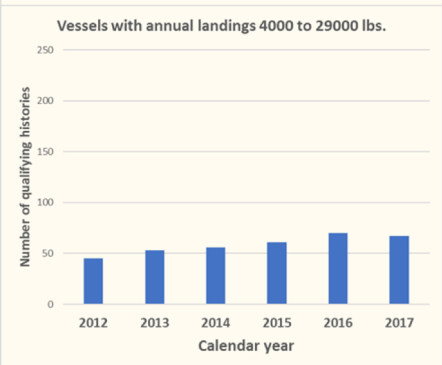
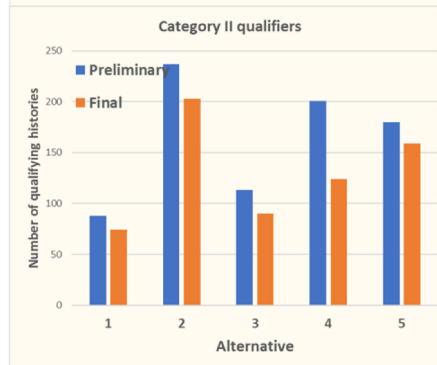
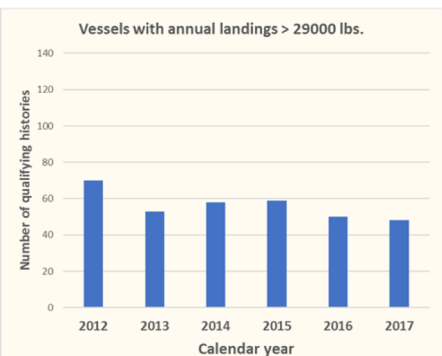
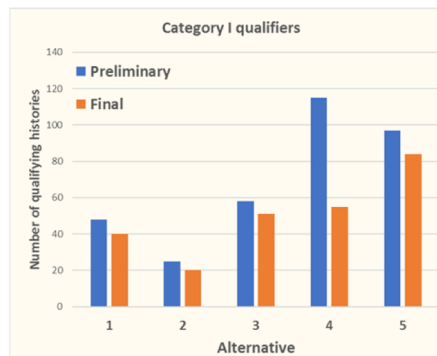
Download a copy of the revised public hearing document [HERE](#)

## Limited Access Qualification Criteria

\* November 28, 2012 control date

Alternative	Qualifying period	Qualification Criteria (Pounds of small-mesh multispecies & number of qualifiers)	
		Category I	Category II
1	2008-2012* 5 years	500,000 lbs. 40 vessels	100,000 lbs. 74 vessels
2	2008-2012* 5 years	1,000,000 lbs. 20 vessels	20,000 lbs. 203 vessels
3	2008-2016 9 years	500,000 lbs. 51 vessels	100,000 lbs. 90 vessels
4	2000-2016 17 years	500,000 lbs. 55 vessels	100,000 lbs. 124 vessels
5	1996-2012* 17 years	1,000,000 lbs. 84 vessels	200,000 lbs. 159 vessels

**NOTE:** The number of qualifying vessels, especially for Alternatives 4 and 5, is lower in the **corrected table above** than in the estimates listed in the original public hearing document. Each alternative contains two permit categories covering different levels of historical landings: (1) a higher-poundage Category I permit; and (2) a lower-poundage Category II permit. Some alternatives use the November 28, 2012 control date as a cutoff point for landings, while others do not. – NEFMC graphics top and bottom





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Here are the possession limit alternatives identified in Amendment 22 by permit category.

- **Category I limited access permit**
  - Alternative 1 – Maintain the existing whiting possession limits (see table below; this is the Council’s preferred alternative)
  - Alternative 2 – Raise the limit from 40,000 pounds to 50,000 pounds from December 1 to April 30 in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic exemption areas
  - Alternative 3 – Lower the limit from 40,000 pounds to 30,000 pounds from May 1 to November 30 in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic exemption areas
- **Category II limited access permit**
  - Alternative 1 – Maintain the existing whiting multispecies possession limits (preferred alternative)
  - Alternative 2 – Apply a 30,000-pound limit in the northern exemption areas (Gulf of Maine Grate Raised Footrope, Small-Mesh Areas I and II, Cape Cod Raised Footrope Areas, and Cultivator Shoals Area) and 15,000 pounds in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic exemption areas where more vessels are expected to qualify and often land lower volume
- **Incidental possession limits for vessels that do not qualify for a limited access permit**
  - Alternative 1 – Maintain the existing small-mesh multispecies possession limits (preferred alternative)
  - Alternative 2 – Apply a 2,000-pound possession limit

## Current Mesh Size-Dependent Possession Limits

Cod-end Mesh Size	Silver and offshore hake, combined, possession limit	Red hake south	Red hake north*
Smaller than 2.5"	3,500 lbs.	5,000 lbs.	3,000/1,500 lbs.
Larger than 2.5", but smaller than 3.0"	7,500 lbs.	5,000 lbs.	3,000/1,500 lbs.
Equal to or greater than 3.0"	30,000 lbs. (40,000 lbs. in Southern Area)	5,000 lbs.	3,000/1,500 lbs.
Accountability measure, in-season	2,000 lbs.	400 lbs.	400 lbs.

\* Northern red hake possession limit is 3,000 lbs. at the beginning of the fishing year and decreases to 1,500 lbs. when landings reach 45% of Total Allowable Landings.

*For more information, contact Senior Fishery Analyst Andrew Applegate, the Council’s small-mesh multispecies coordinator, at (978) 465-0492 ext. 114. He can be reached by email at [aapplegate@nefmc.org](mailto:aapplegate@nefmc.org).*

### In Brief: Here’s What You Need to Know

**Q:** How do I get to the November 13<sup>th</sup> webinar?

**A:** The full link is <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/843126117>

**Q:** What’s the telephone number if I want to call in?

**A:** Dial +1 (872) 240-3311. When prompted, enter the access code 843-126-117.

**Q:** Where can I find the corrected Amendment 22 public hearing document?

**A:** The public hearing document and all related materials are available on the Council’s website at [Amendment 22 webpage](#).

**Q:** Where do I send written comments?

**A:** Comments may be submitted by email to [comments@nefmc.org](mailto:comments@nefmc.org) or via the U.S. Postal Service. Address mailed copies to:

**Tom Nies, Executive Director  
New England Fishery  
Management Council  
50 Water Street, Mill 2  
Newburyport, MA 01950**

Label envelopes and email subject lines with the words: “Comments on Whiting Amendment 22.”