

Greetings.

Two at-large seats on the New England Fishery Management Council will become vacant on August 10, 2022. One seat is currently held by Richard J. Bellavance, Jr. from Rhode Island, who is completing his second term and is eligible for reappointment to a third and final term. The other seat is currently held by Michael Sissenwine from Massachusetts, who is completing his third and final term. At-large seats are regional in nature and not obligated to any particular state; however, Rhode Island has long held one at-large seat on the Council.

The appointments to the Council are made by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, based on recommendations from each state's Governor. On behalf of Governor McKee, RIDEM Acting Director Terrance Gray will coordinate the application process for nominees from Rhode Island and submit the application packages to the Governor for review. RIDEM is hereby soliciting candidates from Rhode Island for one or both of the two Council seats.

NOAA Fisheries has advised the Governors from the New England states that, for this year, they should nominate individuals from the for-hire recreational sector in order to maintain balance on the New England Council. Additionally, Governors are encouraged to consider nominees whose backgrounds, perspectives, and skills would contribute to achieving greater diversity in Council membership and best represent the diverse fishing communities the Councils serve. This includes considering qualified women, minorities, and individuals representative of historically underserved communities, who are currently under-represented on the Councils.

Timing is critical, as the Governor must submit a nomination letter and the completed applications to the Secretary by March 15, 2022. Accordingly, anyone who wishes to be considered as a candidate must notify Robert Ballou, Assistant to the Director, of their intent, by Friday, **February 11, 2022**, and submit a letter of interest, along with a completed Nomination Application Kit, and any letters of recommendation, by Friday, **February 18, 2022**. Please connect with Mr. Ballou via email at Robert.Ballou@dem.ri.gov. All information submitted by applicants will be forwarded to Acting Director Gray, who will then coordinate with the Governor.

The Nomination Application Kit is available at:

https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-12/Nomination%20kit_2022_FDform.pdf

Additional information regarding the nomination process is available at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/partners/council-nomination-process-guidance>

Thank you.