

Groundfish Amendment 23

Monitoring

Public Scoping Hearings

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Public Scoping Period
Feb 17–Apr 3, 2017



New England
Fishery Management Council

Background

- Identified as a Council Priority for 2017
- Groundfish sector at-sea monitoring program expected to be fully funded by industry in FY 2017 (May 1, 2017)
- For more information on the amendment process see:
 - NEPA information – Citizen’s Guide to NEPA
 - https://ceq.doe.gov/get-involved/citizens_guide_to_nepa.html

Scoping Hearing Schedule

Rockport, ME – Friday, March 3, Samoset Resort, 220 Warrenton Street, 9 a.m.

Webinar* – Tuesday, March 14, 6 p.m.

Portsmouth, NH – Tuesday, March 21, Portsmouth Library, 175 Parrot Avenue, 2 p.m.

Gloucester, MA – Tuesday, March 21, NMFS/GARFO, 55 Great Republic Drive, 6 p.m.

Plymouth, MA – Wednesday, March 22, Hilton Garden Inn, 4 Home Depot Drive, 6 p.m.

Groton, CT – Thursday, March 23, Hilton Garden Inn, 224 Gold Star Highway, 6 p.m.

Webinar*

1. Register online at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4567763108442151939>
2. Call in by dialing +1 (415) 930-5321 (regular phone charges apply) and plug in the following access code when prompted: 702-360-151

Draft Amendment 23 Timeline

- **Public Scoping Comment Period**
 - Council approved draft Notice of Intent for Scoping, Nov 2016
 - Public scoping hearings, March 2017
 - Closing date for public comments, April 3 2017
- **Range of alternatives**
 - Plan Development Team, Advisory Panel, and Groundfish Committee review results of public scoping, March 2017 – May 2017
 - Council discusses likely range of alternatives, June 2017
- **Develop alternatives and analysis (draft EIS), Council selects preliminary preferred alternatives, and public comment period**
 - Mid- 2017- late 2018
- **Review of public comments and final action by the Council**
 - Late 2018 – early 2019
- **Implementation**
 - FY 2019 (May 1)

Scoping Document

- **Purpose of Amendment 23**

To adjust the groundfish monitoring program to improve reliability and accountability.

- **Background information**

- Sector management
- At-sea monitoring goals

- **Potential changes to consider**

The Council is proposing to consider changes to the groundfish monitoring and reporting system to ensure it is providing accurate catch information necessary to manage the fishery efficiently.

Overview of Groundfish Commercial Fishery Monitoring

- **Landings** - Self-reported data from fishing vessels and fish dealers – Vessel Trip Reports (VTRs) and Dealer Reports
- **Discards** - At-sea observers
 - Northeast Fishery Observer Program (NEFOP)*
 - Sector at-sea monitoring program (ASM)
- **Catch locations** - VTRs

*Note: Changes to NEFOP will not be considered in A23

ASM Program

- Framework 55 clarified the Amendment 16 goal that the ASM program is to verify area fished, catch, and discards by species, by gear type, and that this primary goal should be met in the most cost effective manner practicable.
- Concerns with catch accuracy and monitoring costs raised.

Some examples of ideas discussed to date

- Electronic monitoring in place of ASM
- Tracking sector/vessel specific discards
- Setting total allowable landings limits
- Monitoring fishery-wide discards with only NEFOP
- Landings information provided through dockside monitoring
- Assigning catches by stock areas with increased frequency of VMS polling

For Today: Questions to Consider

The Council may consider changes to any part of the system used to collect and report commercial catch information in the Northeast multispecies fishery.

- 1) What alternatives should the Council consider in Amendment 23 to change the groundfish monitoring program? For example, how can we improve the accuracy of the catch data from the fishery?
- 2) What specific issues are most important when evaluating the tradeoffs associated with monitoring discards at sea using at-sea monitors?
- 3) Should the Council consider changes to the way landings information is provided?

How to Submit a Public Comment

- Today at the public hearing
- In writing:
 - Fax: (978) 465-3116;
 - Email: comments@nefmc.org
 - Mail: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill #2
Newburyport, MA 01950
- Closing Date: Monday, April 3, 2017

