



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



Joint Statement by Patricia Kurkul, regional administrator, Northeast Regional Office, and Frank Almeida, acting director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Fisheries Service

June 23, 2011

We applaud the Council for today announcing its plans to improve communications and collaboration with stakeholders, begin development of a strategic vision, and design a performance management system to track and improve the regulatory decision making process. We strongly support and are committed to working with the Council on these activities.

Each of the three organizations involved in developing and implementing federal fishery management measures in New England has an important role to play in streamlining management procedures to better serve the fishing community and protect our natural resources. And, it is critical that we all work together. The Council's response to the management review of the fisheries management process in New England is positive and synergistic with our response.

Over the past two months, NOAA has begun to address the priority areas identified in the management report: improving our data management systems, collaborating more effectively with our partners on science, cooperative research, and reviews of our science programs, exploring new approaches to communicating with fishermen about regulatory actions and the science behind those actions, and identifying ways for the three organizations to work together effectively to make these improvements.

Some of our responses to the management review report, such as analyzing and streamlining of our data management systems, will take months of development and sustained effort to implement. Others are already underway.

Our Cooperative Research Program is in the midst of holding a series of outreach meetings with fishermen and scientists to gather input to refine its research strategic plan. We're working with the two councils in the region to simplify regulations related to vessel replacements. We have begun development of cooperative agreements with the Councils, which will specify the roles of everyone involved in the development of a council action, from idea to implementation.

We've launched a "plain language" campaign, and we're striving to make our written documents more clear and concise. We will be consulting with fishermen about the best format and medium for information on regulations and the science behind them. For example, many industry members have told us that the NOAA Fisheries Navigator, a bi-monthly insert in a trade publication, is informative and accessible, and we will continue to tailor new outreach materials

to match how fishermen are accessing regulatory and business information. We're making it easier to find current and relevant information on our websites. Dozens of staff have attended customer service training, and we're looking for ways to make the public's interactions with our staff even more productive and comfortable.

All of this is a work in progress. As we move forward implementing these projects, we will continue to share our accomplishments and invite feedback from the public. We expect to provide a detailed overview at the September Council meeting.

We all want the fishery management process to run smoothly and efficiently. The efforts announced today by the Council and the ongoing work of our agency will help us to continue to move forward with rebuilding fish stocks and promoting sustainable, profitable fisheries and healthy coastal communities in New England.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on Facebook , Twitter and our other social media channels.