



OFFICE OF ADVOCACY *FACTSHEET*

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Advocacy Files Comments on “Amendment 13” to the New England Groundfish Fishery Management Plan

On November 3, 2003, the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Office of Advocacy (Advocacy) filed comments with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) on Amendment 13 to the New England Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. The comments can be found at www.sba.gov/advo/laws/comments.

- Amendment 13 is a comprehensive fishery management plan designed to rebuild the fishing stock in New England, reduce overfishing, and reduce by-catch. It may include fishery management measures such as the imposition of fishing quotas, days at sea limitations, and gear restrictions.
- Small entities in the fishing industry are extremely concerned that the Council may adopt management measures that are overly burdensome, which could cause some to leave the fishing industry. Members of the fishing industry have submitted alternatives to the Council for consideration. The Council, however, did not accept all of the suggested alternatives; therefore, some concerns of the industry may not be addressed. Advocacy asked the Council to adopt a fishery management plan that promotes maximum flexibility and fully considers the concerns and suggestions of the fishing industry.
- Members of the fishing industry have also expressed concerns about the reliability of the scientific data. Without reliable scientific data, the appropriate course of action for protecting the species and the fishing industry cannot be determined. The industry has filed a Data Quality Act petition to address this concern. Advocacy has asked NMFS to give careful consideration to the petition.
- The Council is responsible for reviewing the science, economic analysis, and alternatives to develop a fishery management plan that fulfills conservation objectives while ensuring the sustainability of the fishing industry. The Council planned to review the information and vote to adopt a preferred alternative at its meeting November 4-6, 2003.
- After the Council has selected an alternative, NMFS will develop a proposed rule to implement the alternative. At that time, NMFS will perform an initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) to determine the economic impact the proposed rule may have on small entities. Advocacy offered its assistance in the preparation of the IRFA.

For more information, visit the Office of Advocacy website at www.sba.gov/advo or contact Jennifer Smith at 202-205-6943.