



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

DEC 23 2009

Dear Limited Access Northeast (NE) Multispecies Permit Holder:

This letter announces an additional opportunity for sectors to add eligible NE multispecies permits to their rosters as well as an opportunity for permit holders that have signed a sector contract to change the sector affiliation of their permit, for fishing year (FY) 2010 (May 1, 2010, through April 30, 2011). This letter supersedes deadlines included in previous letters from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) dated June 18, 2008, and October 30, 2009.

NMFS initially established a September 1, 2009, deadline for FY 2010 sector rosters. On October 30, 2009, NMFS announced a second opportunity to join a sector for FY 2010 for permit holders that had not previously signed a sector contract. That letter specified that permits added to a sector after November 20, 2009, would not be included in the current sector rulemaking process; and, therefore, would be unable to fish in the sector or common pool fisheries during FY 2010 until authorized by an additional rulemaking. After reviewing the issue and the timing of the rulemaking process, NMFS has determined that it is not possible to have a permit approved to join a sector for FY 2010 after April 30, 2010, because this would reduce the allocation previously made to the common pool and thus increase the likelihood that the common pool could overfish their allocation. After further evaluation, NMFS believes that additional permits could be added to a sector in time to be included in the final rule for a May 1, 2010, implementation date (contingent upon approval). Accordingly, NMFS is setting a new deadline of January 22, 2010, for sectors to add permits to their rosters for FY 2010. Should additions to a sector's roster trigger the need for further analysis, NMFS would discuss the supplemental requirements with the sector's manager.

Based on additional discussions with the industry, NMFS has also agreed to allow permit holders that have previously signed a sector contract an opportunity to change sectors prior to the start of FY 2010, consistent with the additional opportunity provided to permit holders that had not previously joined a sector, i.e., by January 22, 2010. Each sector must decide whether or not members may leave the sector and whether or not to accept new members. No permit may be enrolled in more than one sector during FY 2010.

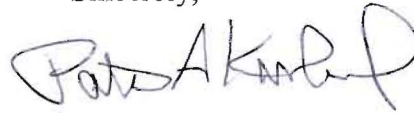
Each sector must provide an updated roster, including copies of signed sector contracts for each new member, to NMFS no later than January 22, 2010. Sectors may remove permits from their rosters through April 30, 2010; however, based on this deadline permits withdrawn from a sector after January 22, 2010, would not be allowed to join another sector and would be restricted to fishing in the common pool for FY 2010.



The January 22, 2010, deadline is set to provide time for these roster changes to be included in the final environmental assessment of proposed sector operations for FY 2010. Please note that a sector may individually set more restrictive deadlines for permit holders to join or exit the sector. If you are currently enrolled in a sector for FY 2010, please contact your sector manager if you have questions about your sector's procedures for withdrawing from that sector.

Implementation of the proposed Amendment 16 sector management program has been a collaborative learning experience for both the industry and NMFS. In changing these deadlines, NMFS is striving to provide maximum flexibility to the industry in making very important decisions concerning future fishing opportunities. If you have questions about sectors in general, please contact Mark Grant at 978-281-9145.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patricia A. Kurkul". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

cc: New England Fishery Management Council