



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** American Lobster Management Board  
**FROM:** American Lobster and Jonah Crab Advisory Panels  
**DATE:** January 22, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** Recommendations Regarding Draft Addendum XXVI/III

The American Lobster and Jonah Crab Advisory Panels (APs) met via conference call on January 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss the management options in Lobster Draft Addendum XXVI/Jonah Crab Draft Addendum III. On the call, the APs reviewed the management issues, reviewed public comment to-date, and provided recommendations regarding the various management alternatives in the document. This memo summarizes the discussion had by the APs and their recommendations to the Board regarding Draft Addendum XXVI/III.

### **AP Attendance**

Grant Moore (MA – Chair Lobster)	Robert Nudd (NH)
Sonny Gwin (MD – Chair Jonah Crab)	Sooky Sawyer (MA)
David Cousens (ME)	John Whittaker (CT)
Bob Baines (ME)	Jack Fullmer (NJ)

### **Issue 1: Percent Harvester Reporting**

- 5 AP members supported 100% harvester reporting for all federally permitted lobster vessels. Two individuals commented that, as the lobster fishery moves further offshore, the data gaps which already exist in federal waters will become exacerbated. Another individual commented that, at present, there is not a clear picture of where the lobster fishery is taking place in federal waters.
  - Of the five AP members above, two commented that they support 10% harvester reporting in Maine state waters and 100% reporting in federal waters. One individual noted that the TC has shown 10% harvester reporting is sufficient in Maine but commented that greater reporting is needed offshore. The other individual expressed concern that 100% harvester reporting in Maine could force the State to divert funds away from biological sampling and towards harvester reporting.
- 2 AP members supported maintaining the 10% harvester reporting requirement in the lobster fishery. One individual commented that the TC concluded that the 10% harvester reporting in Maine is providing statically precise data and the State could not handle 100% reporting given the number of trips conducted annually. The other individual commented that 100% harvester reporting would be redundant in the lobster fishery and would not improve the statistical power of the data.

- Of the two AP members above, one supported redistributing the current 10% harvester reporting in Maine to focus on active, as opposed to latent, permits (Option B).
- One AP member asked if the recreational lobster fishery could help address the data gaps in the fishery. He recommended that there be an optional reporting program for recreational fishermen.

### **Issue 2: Harvester Reporting Data Components**

- 4 AP members supported a re-design of the federal VTR so that the form encompasses all of the data needs in the lobster fishery and is easy for fishermen to fill out. Specifically, they recommended that NMFS and industry members work together to make the form logical in its design and effective in its content. One AP member commented that a re-design is necessary given the current data requirements on the federal form are interpreted differently by different fishermen.
- One AP member supported the inclusion of 'soak time' as a required data element but did not see the need to report on 'bait type' (both in Option B).
- Another AP member supported the inclusion of gear configuration data elements in harvester reports (Option C), commenting that it is pertinent to the ALWTRT.
- One AP member expressed concern about the inclusion of 'depth' as a data element given a single trawl can span a wide range of depths. He commented that information regarding depth fished could be gleaned from a latitude/longitude point or a 10 minute square.
- Another individual commented that it would be ideal if there was a single coastwide form for the lobster industry.

### **Issue 3: Spatial Resolution of Harvester Data**

- 5 AP members did not support the establishment of an electronic tracking pilot program in the lobster fishery (Option E). One AP member expressed concern that the cost of tracking will fall on fishermen. Another AP member agreed that better spatial data is needed in the lobster fishery but that tracking is not the way to achieve this. Instead, he favored the other options in the document. Another AP member commented that there will be no resolution of data within 12 miles if tracking is used because all of the lines will cover one another. A final AP member commented that there is already VMS on some lobster boats (due to other species permits) and the Board should look to see what location data is currently available.
- One AP member did support the exploration of electronic tracking devices for federal vessels, but noted that this would be too much to ask of state permitted individuals. He commented that he would like to see the results of this pilot program, especially with the expansion of the Jonah crab fishery.
- 2 AP members supported the implementation of 10 minute squares, with one individual commenting that it is important a fisherman does not have to fill out a separate form for each square fished. The other individual commented that a single latitude/longitude point on the VTR form does not give a complete picture of where gear is situated and

improved spatial information will help the fishery in the long run because it will provide a history of where the fishery is taking place.

- One AP member did not support the use of distance from shore (Option C) since SA 616 is all within state waters.
- One AP member supported the inclusion of LCMA on harvester reports (Option B).

#### **Additional Comments**

- One AP member commented that the Board needs to push for greater sea/port sampling over the whole range of the fishery, highlighting the large biological data gap noted in the Draft Addendum.
- Another AP member highlighted the importance of reporting being fishermen friendly, meaning it is intuitive for fishermen to fill out and multiple reports are not needed for the same trip.
- One AP member expressed concern that some options in the document could force the lobster fishery to follow the reporting requirements of the groundfish fishery, and cautioned against making such changes.