



New England Fishery Management Council

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Groundfish Monitoring Amendment 23: Join the May 12 and May 21 Public Hearing Webinars

The New England Fishery Management Council has scheduled two more public hearings on Draft Groundfish Monitoring Amendment 23, which is being developed to improve the accuracy and accountability of catch reporting in the commercial groundfish fishery.

The Council held its first public hearing on [April 15, 2020](#) by webinar. Given the continued restrictions on public gatherings due to COVID-19, the Council will hold the [May 12 and May 21](#) public hearings by webinar as well. Here's what you need to know to join in.

- **Tuesday, May 12, 2020:** This public hearing will begin at 4:00 p.m.
 - [REGISTER HERE](#) to participate.
- **Thursday, May 21, 2020:** This public hearing also will begin at 4:00 p.m.
 - [REGISTER HERE](#) to participate.

Those who register and intend to provide comments on Draft Amendment 23 may want to review three documents in advance of the hearings:

- The [public hearing document](#);
 - The hearing [presentation](#); and
 - The [Remote Participation Guide](#), which outlines the steps participants need to follow to successfully join the webinar and speak when called upon.
- Also, background materials are housed on the [Amendment 23 webpage](#).

Important Amendment 23 Updates!

1. The public comment deadline for Draft Amendment 23 has been extended to June 30, 2020.
 - Email written comments to comments@nefmc.org under the subject line "DEIS for Amendment 23 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP."
2. The Council will hold additional public hearings. Details will be announced in the near future.
3. The Council's Executive Committee will meet to review the status of the COVID-19 situation and discuss next steps. The date for final action has not been determined yet.

Amendment 23: Commercial Groundfish Monitoring Action

New England Fishery Management Council
Amendment 23 Public Hearing
Webinar





New England Fishery Management Council

Draft Amendment 23 contains a range of possible revisions to the commercial groundfish monitoring program. Some of the proposed measures would affect common pool vessels and federally registered dealers, but the majority of the alternatives apply primarily to groundfish sector vessels.

Preferred Alternatives for Groundfish Sectors

IMPORTANT: The Council is seeking public comment on **all** of the management alternatives and options that are under consideration. However, it did select several “preferred” alternatives among the measures that pertain **only** to groundfish sector vessels. These are:

- 100% at-sea monitoring (ASM) coverage of all trips, which can be achieved through a combination of ASM and Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) coverage;
- The ability to use electronic monitoring (EM) tools in lieu of human at-sea monitors either through the audit model or maximized retention EM programs (maximized retention EM has a dockside monitoring component);
- Elimination of the management uncertainty buffer for sector sub-annual catch limits of allocated stocks if 100% monitoring is selected (other options include 25%, 50%, and 75%, which would not lead to elimination of the uncertainty buffer under the preferred alternative);
- A review process to evaluate the monitoring coverage rate; and
- The ability to add monitoring tools and vessel specific coverage levels through a future framework action.

Two Preferred Alternatives Apply to Both Sector and Common Pool Vessels

- Allow waivers from monitoring requirements under certain conditions.
- Remove monitoring program requirements for vessels fishing exclusively west of 71 degrees 30 minutes west longitude from at-sea and dockside monitoring coverage (if implemented), and establish a review process for vessels removed from commercial groundfish monitoring program requirements.

Groundfish Amendment 23 Decision Tree

