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**New England Fishery Management Council**  
Whiting Oversight Committee Meeting  
Providence, RI

Meeting Summary  
August 25, 2010

**Purpose of meeting:** Based on advice and data provided by the Whiting Advisory Panel and the Plan Development Team, the Oversight Committee developed recommendations for Annual Catch Limit allocations, accountability measures, and management alternatives for Draft Amendment 19.

**Attendance:** Committee members: David Goethel (chair), Mary Beth Tooley, Mark Alexander, Rodney Avila, and Frank Blount. Also in attendance were Andrew Applegate (staff), Moira Kelly and Michael Pentony (NMFS staff), Bill Phoel (Advisor), and Donald Fox, Paddy McGlah, and Patrick Knapp.

**Summary**

The Whiting Oversight Committee met on August 25, 2011 and developed alternatives to recommend to the Council to include for development and analysis in Draft Amendment 19, which will implement Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures for the 2012-2014 fishing years. After hearing from Council staff regarding updates to whiting assessments and ABC ranges approved by the SSC, as well as recommendations (in the form of motions) from the Advisory Panel, the Oversight Committee approved the following motions.

During the discussion, concerns were raised about the accuracy of red hake discard estimates. There were also concerns about the accuracy of silver and red hake landings data assigned to state waters. It is possible that these data are confounded with aggregate landings reported by dealers in NY and assigned to states where the landing took place. The committee asked that the PDT provide more details on both issues.

Two possible approaches to an ACL framework were discussed during the meeting. One approach uses an Annual Catch Target (ACT), where the management uncertainty buffer is taken into account and the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) equals the Allowable Biological Catch (ABC). Such an approach is used for skates, monkfish, and red crab. Another approach accounts for the management buffer in the ACL, which is then less than ABC. This approach is used for groundfish and herring. The Oversight Committee chose this approach to be consistent with these plans.

Some plans also employ a Total Allowable Landings (TAL) to allocate and set limits on landings. For this approach to work, it requires an assumption about the pounds or rate of future discards, with a procedure to change the specifications when new discard data become available. And although the adjustment cannot occur until the second year after new data become available and can be analyzed, it does not require real time monitoring of discards. The Oversight Committee felt that real time monitoring of discards would require a high level of sampling and

would be too costly for industry to bear. The Oversight Committee therefore chose to follow the advice from the Advisory Panel and set and (if necessary) allocate TALs to seasons and fisheries.

Three issues were left open and would be taken up at a follow-up Oversight Committee meeting, following more dialogue with fishermen and industry advisors. One was prohibiting retention of red hake on trips by vessels using less than 2.5 inch mesh. If included in the amendment, it would require vessels to sort and discard red hake, often a difficult task in fisheries that land large quantities.

The other issue was the need for and the effect of red hake possession limits in the southern stock area. It could be difficult to set meaningful possession limits “to keep the fishery open for the year” when the total catch limits are higher than current catches.

Lastly, it was unclear whether the industry advisors intended for possession limits to decline to an incidental level when either the red or silver hake landings reach a 90% trigger. Individual actions by species might cause unintended discards. On the other hand, one species might become a choke point for the other species if the trigger reduced possession limits for both when the landings of one reached the 90% trigger.

The Oversight Committee decided that these and possibly other issues would be taken up with a joint meeting to be scheduled on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Advisory Panel elected Vito Calomo as Chair and Dan Farnham as Vice Chair

### MOTIONS

1. Mrs. Tooley/Mr. Avila moved to consider 25 and 35 percentile of the OFL as the basis for setting northern and southern silver hake Allowable Biological Catch (ABC). The motion carried 4-0.
2. Mrs. Tooley/Mr. Avila moved to consider 25, 30, and 35 percentile of the OFL as the basis for setting northern and southern red hake ABCs. The motion carried 4-0.
3. Mrs. Tooley /Mr. Alexander moved to utilize a 5% management uncertainty buffer for setting silver hake Annual Catch Limits (ACLs). The motion carried 4-0.
4. Mr. Avila/Mr. Blount moved that Amendment 19 include an alternative that would set an annual Total Allowable Landings (TAL) for southern whiting stocks. If the previous year’s landings are greater than 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of the TAL, via authority given to the Regional Administrator, the plan would trigger an allocation of the TAL to fishing year quarters in the following year according to 2008-2010 proportions. The allocation procedure would include a provision to roll over underages to the next quarter and overages to be deducted from the fourth fishing year quarter. First quarter underages would roll over to the third quarter (winter), instead of the second quarter. The motion carried 3-0.

5. Mrs. Tooley/Mr. Avila moved that the draft amendment consider two additional alternatives: no sub-allocation of the annual TAL and another implementing a quarterly TAL allocation regardless of relationship between landings and TAL. The motion carried 4-0.
6. Mrs. Tooley/Mr. Alexander moved to include two options in the alternatives to apply separately by species, or to implement a quarterly allocation at the same time for red and silver hake. The motion carried 4-0.
7. Mr. Alexander/Mr. Avila moved to include as an Amendment 19 alternative an allocation of northern area TALs into 3 area groups (Cultivator Shoals, Other Exempted Areas, Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank exemption area), according to historic (2004-2010) proportions. The motion carried 4-0.
8. Mr. Alexander/Mrs. Tooley moved to include a rollover provision, so that underages in Cultivator Shoals are allocated to other Gulf of Maine exempted areas during the fishing year. The motion carried 4-0.
9. Mrs. Tooley/Mr. Avila moved to include as an alternative an annual TAL by species for each stock area. The motion carried 4-0.
10. Mr. Blount/ Mr. Alexander moved to include in Amendment 19 an alternative that would establish a red hake possession limit by cod end mesh size in the northern stock area, similar to the provision for silver hake. The motion carried 4-0.
11. Mr. Avila moved to include in Amendment 19 an alternative that would specify no red hake possession for vessels fishing in the northern area and using less than 2.5 inch mesh. Passed over.
12. Mrs. Tooley/Mr. Alexander moved to include in Amendment 19 alternatives that when the Regional Administrator projects that 90% of each stock TAL is reached, the possession limit for that stock would decline to a (TBD) incidental limit. The motion carried 4-0.
13. Mr. Blount/Mr. Alexander moved to include in Amendment 19 an alternative that would establish a southern area red hake possession limit intended to keep the fishery open throughout the year. Motion passed over until the next meeting.
14. Mrs. Tooley/Mr. Avila moved to include in A19 two alternatives for reactive accountability measures. One alternative would be a pound for pound payback provision to apply to year 2, following the year of an overage. Another alternative would reduce the incidental limit trigger to apply to year 2, following the year of an overage. The motion carried 4-0.

