

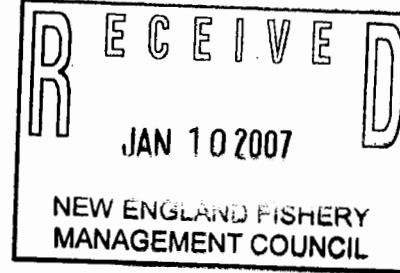


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

#5

January 4, 2007

Capt. Paul J. Howard  
Executive Director  
New England Fishery Management Council  
60 Water Street  
Newburyport, MA 01950



Dear Paul:

Thank you for your letter of December 6. Center staff has worked extensively with the NEFMC RSC on peer reviews of cooperative research projects, including Industry Based Surveys, Cod Tagging, gear studies and Study Fleet. The next RSC meeting (Jan 17) will feature a discussion of recent survey reviews including the cod survey, monkfish, ME-NH inshore and Mid-Atlantic transect surveys. We supported these reviews and have worked to respond pro-actively to the concerns of the RSC.

Center staff will coordinate planning for peer reviews for the SNE-YTF and the Study Fleet Electronic logbook with the NEFMC RSC and Pat Fiorelli, as soon as budget constraints are relaxed. A peer review for the Study Fleet project was recommended at the SF annual meeting in June 2006. Council staff comments relating to the study fleet project (Oct 13 letter to NEFMC Executive Committee) have been received and we will schedule a demonstration of the logbook software as soon as possible. Our sense is that the Council is primarily interested in a review of the utility of the data collected with the logbooks for stock assessments and management analyses, rather than an IT system development review. The terms of reference will distinguish between the utility of the current data collected from the pilot project, versus alternative system deployments.

We would appreciate Council recommendations for reviewers for both the SNE-YTF and the Study Fleet. As was indicated in the Council CRPP briefing on September 27, NERO and the NEFSC remain committed to an inclusive planning process, with adequate constituent input on future cooperative research investments. Suitable peer reviews are critical elements of that process. I look forward to working with you on cooperative research priorities.

Sincerely,

Nancy B. Thompson, Ph.D.  
Science and Research Director

cc: Pat Kurkul, NER

cc: CBK (1/10), PMF





New England Fishery Management Council

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John Pappalardo, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

December 6, 2006

Dr. Nancy Thompson  
Acting Science and Research Director  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
166 Water Street  
Woods Hole, MA 02543

Dear Dr. Thompson:

At its most recent meeting in November, the New England Fishery Management Council discussed a number of issues related to the long-term cooperative research programs that have been undertaken by NOAA Fisheries and managed, at least in part, by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. In particular, the pilot study fleet program was discussed during the Research Steering Committee's report to our members, because of its importance to the Northeast Cooperative Research Partners Program and its potential utility to management.

The Council noted that peer reviews have either occurred or are contemplated for the other long-term cooperative programs the Council has supported, for example, the cod and yellowtail flounder industry-based survey projects. Similarly, we are requesting a peer review for the study fleet program. By all accounts such efforts have proven to be very worthwhile. For the sake of consistency and to continue to gain as much information as possible from all of the long-term pilot cooperative research projects, we feel that such a review would be useful, especially from a management perspective.

As always, please feel free to contact me at any time concerning this request and thank you for any assistance you are able to provide.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Howard  
Executive Director

cc: Patricia Kurkul - NOAA/NMFS