



MAR 23 2011

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we enclose for your review the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Amendment 15 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (Amendment 15).

This FEIS is prepared pursuant to NEPA to assess the environmental impacts associated with NOAA proceeding with Amendment 15. Amendment 15 was developed by the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) primarily to implement annual catch limits and accountability measures to bring the Scallop FMP into compliance with requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as reauthorized in 2007. Amendment 15 includes additional measures recommended by the Council, including: A revision of the overfishing definition; modification of the essential fish habitat closed areas under the Scallop FMP; adjustments to measures for the Limited Access General Category fishery; adjustments to the scallop research set-aside program; and additions to the list of measures that can be adjusted by framework adjustments.

Additional copies of the FEIS may be obtained from the Council at:

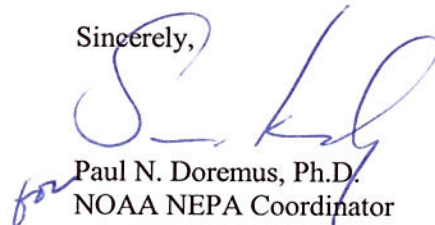
50 Water Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
(978) 465-0492

The document is also accessible electronically through the NEFMC's website at <http://www.nefmc.org> or NMFS's Northeast Regional Office website at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/>

Written comments should be submitted through mail, facsimile (fax), or email to the Responsible Program Official identified below. Written comments submitted during the agency's 30-day public comment period must be received by May 2, 2011. When submitting fax or email comments include the following document identifier in the comment subject line: Comments on Scallop Amendment 15.

Responsible Program Official: Patricia A. Kurkul
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Sincerely,


Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure