

# Habitat Omnibus Amendment Update

NEFMC Meeting

Portland ME

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# Scope of Omnibus expanded

- Council voted in April to expand scope of action to include evaluation and possible changes to “year-round groundfish rebuilding closures”
- This influences the development strategy and also the timeline

# Updated NOI/request for comments

- NOI prepared informing public of decision to expand scope – published on 6/17/2011 – on NEFMC website
- Requesting comments on:
  - Change in scope
  - Issues related to the development of EFH impacts minimization alternatives
  - Utility of existing or alternative closures to address the needs of groundfish stocks
  - Impacts of changes to the existing closures on groundfish fishing and other activities (such as Special Access Programs, exempted/certified bycatch fisheries, recreational fishing opportunities, endangered or threatened species protection, etc.)

# Development strategy in brief

- Develop habitat management options
- Develop groundfish management options
- Combine options into sets of packaged alternatives
- Council approves alternatives for analysis
- Council selects preferred alternatives, public hearings, etc.
- Council approves amendment

# Habitat management options

- Minimize adverse effects to EFH from fishing
  - Modify/eliminate some of the current habitat areas, change gear restrictions
  - Add new habitat areas – measures for these areas could include gear modifications, effort limits, closure to certain gears
  - Frameworkable items?
  - Research areas

# Habitat management options

- Minimize fishing effects on deep-sea corals
  - Deep-sea coral zones
    - Both localized (i.e. single canyon) and broad (i.e. large region of continental slope) have been discussed
  - Restrictions as necessary within coral zones
  - Frameworkable items
  - Research-related measures

# Recent and upcoming meetings

- PDT – June 8-9 – discussed areas appropriate for adverse effects minimization options; discussed strategy for coral areas
- PDT – conference calls late June/early July
- Advisory Panel – July 20 – review current options and updated PDT info
- Committee – July 21 – receive updated PDT recommendations and refine options

# Timeline (approximate)

- Summer 2011 – refine habitat management options
- September 2011 – present habitat options to Council
- Winter 2011 – groundfish committee/PDT begin review of groundfish areas and associated management options
- Spring 2012 – present groundfish options to Council
- Late Spring 2012 – combine habitat and groundfish options into packaged alternatives