



# *New England Fishery Management Council*

## *News Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Patricia Fiorelli**

### ***Council Reaffirms Decision on New Groundfish Rules***

Mystic, CT Just before noon today, the New England Fishery Management Council reaffirmed its late January decision to move ahead with new rules that are designed to boost rebuilding of the region's cod and yellowtail flounder stocks. The action under discussion, Framework Adjustment 42 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan, targets stocks of concern that are at continued low levels: Gulf of Maine cod, Cape Cod/Gulf of Maine yellowtail flounder, Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic yellowtail flounder, and Georges Bank yellowtail flounder --- and to a lesser degree Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder, Georges Bank winter flounder, and white hake. The Council's efforts are on schedule to rebuild 12 other stocks managed through its "groundfish" management plan.

The eighteen-member Council voted 13 to 4 to stay the course on Framework 42 after discussing reconsideration of an alternative that would have charged vessels a minimum of twenty-four hours for any part of a day used. Similar to the debate at the January Council meeting in Portland, ME, the measure was again rejected because of concerns that small vessels with limited crews might fish the entire period to maximize revenues, a situation many Council members believed could lead to fatigue and compromise safety at sea. The vote also reflected a desire on the part of the Council to move forward with alternatives to the current form of groundfish management in the future, a subject that was repeatedly addressed during the discussion.

During today's groundfish management discussion, the Council also received an evaluation of a proposal that was presented by a coalition of industry groups at the last Council meeting. Intended to meet the conservation goals specified in Framework 42 and reduce some of the severe economic impacts of that action, analyses developed by the Council's Groundfish Plan Development Team showed the proposal was unlikely to meet those goals. The proposal may be considered in the future when management measures are scheduled for revision. Meanwhile, Framework 42 is under review by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) with implementation expected sometime this summer. The groundfish fishery will be operating under NMFS emergency rules beginning on May 1 and until the Framework 42 measures are in place.

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