

TO: MULTISPECIES CAPACITY REDUCTION COMMITTEE
FROM: CHRIS MEANEY
SUBJECT: NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC MEETING
DATE: JUNE 21, 2006

This is a brief overview of the public meeting held in New Bedford, Massachusetts at the United Fisherman's Club on Tuesday June 20, 2006.

The staff members present were David Borden and Chad Demarest, with Bob Lane representing the Capacity Reduction Committee. David Martins of UMass Dartmouth translated the presentation into Portuguese. Approximately 24 individuals, mainly fisherman, were present.

The evening started at 4:15 PM with David Martins giving the power point presentation in Portuguese. Chad then gave the presentation in English, as there were several bilingual and English-speaking audience members present, and then David and David took questions in both languages. Approximately 20 people were present for this portion of the meeting. At 6:15 PM Chad gave the presentation again for a group of four new arrivals, and David B. took questions until 8:00 PM.

Several audience members had permits with no A and B DAS, and they were not at all happy with the proposal. This was compounded by some confusion in the way that the summary document is worded—it legitimately does not make it clear that the Non-Groundfish Permits section applies only to A and B DAS permit holders, meaning that they had arrived at the meeting thinking that they would be eligible for that program; they were quite unhappy to learn that they were not. This problem will be corrected, but it may arise again due to the wide circulation of the summary document.

The Mayor of New Bedford, Scott Lange, listened to the second go-round of the presentation and asked a thoughtful question concerning potential problems that may arise for permit holders if they have pension obligations dating back to the Seafarer's Union in New Bedford.

The audience overall was tuned in to the details of the plan, and with few exceptions they did not express generalized opinions, in support or in opposition, about the program. Rather, they wanted to know how their monkfish permits would be affected, why we used certain years for certain calculations, and how the bid ranking system was likely to work out in terms of desired ratios. In short, they looking out for the devil in the details.

Below is a list of comments received during the public comment period.

- All groundfish should be taxed, because it's possible to land groundfish when not on a Day-at-Sea (DAS). We should not apply the tax to other species landed on a groundfish DAS.

- Category C DAS (only) permit holders should get to participate in the “Disposition of non-groundfish permits” program. That is, if their C DAS are bought out and they lose their groundfish permit, they should be entitled to surrender their non-groundfish permits, with the same payout as the A and B DAS permit holders.
- If a C-DAS (only) permit holder surrenders their permit in the buyout, they will be converted from a monkfish C or D to a monkfish A or B permit. The value of the C-DAS in the program (\$150/C DAS) is low enough that the program will not apply to any active monkfish fisherman in the northern monkfish area.
- Looking at the timeline, if the fee were to kick in mid-fishing year there could be an incentive to fish a disproportionate number of DAS prior to the fee’s inception.
- The fishery will never harvest all stocks at Fmsy because at least one stock will always be in a down-cycle, requiring restrictions that prevent achieving optimal yield on other stocks. This will affect the industry’s ability to repay the loan.
- To get direct feedback relevant to Congress deciding to authorize the program, the first referendum should ask the question “Do you anticipate placing a bid in the buyout?” ...or something similar.
- The C-DAS portion of the program (for all permit holders) should be funded by a federal allocation and not by the groundfish industry loan.
- The language on “restricted future uses of vessels” may need to be expanded because the legislative guidance as it now stands may only prevent vessels *purchased by the Secretary of Commerce* from fishing in the future. As the buyout program is currently constructed, only permits are being, essentially, purchased...not vessels.
- Given the government handouts that the European Union fisheries and the West Coast (U.S.) salmon fisheries have received in the past few days, the industry would be better served asking for a federal allocation rather than a federally-backed loan.
- The industry should want to see the rationale for the development of the capacity estimate formula.
- The number of votes per permit holder should be proportional to the capacity of the vessel and not the number of DAS held by that permit.

The next Buyout public meeting will be held on Thursday June 22 in Narragansett at the Corless Auditorium URI Bay Campus.