



PRESS RELEASE

Recreational Fishing Alliance

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For Immediate Release
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NE Council Allocates Cod, Haddock to Recreational Sector

After considerable debate as well as vocal opposition by a number of commercial fishermen, the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) voted on June 24 to allocate 33.7% of Gulf of Maine cod and 27.5% of haddock to the recreational fishing sector. The allocation will be part of a comprehensive new groundfish management plan known as Amendment 16.

“This is an historic vote,” said Capt. Barry Gibson, New England Regional Director of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) and chairman of the Council’s Recreational Advisory Panel. “For over 30 years the sport fishing sector has been managed as an afterthought to the commercial sector, and has had to pay the price every time commercial catches exceeded target levels or stock levels declined. But now private anglers and the party/charter industry will have their own percentage of cod and haddock to manage, and will no longer have to answer to commercial overages.”

The Council considered and debated two timeframe windows on which to base the recreational/commercial split. The first, 1996 to 2006, would have given the recreational sector only 25% of the cod and 17% of the haddock, and would have triggered additional restrictions in minimum size, bag limit, or season. The second timeframe, which was voted up, was based on 2001-2006 and created larger recreational shares with no additional restrictions.

“We didn’t expect the Council to vote for the five-year timeframe,” commented Gibson, who spearheaded the allocation drive. “Much of the credit goes to all the New England party/charter operators and private anglers who sent in letters and emails in support of the larger allocations. In addition, several key Council members presented solid justification for the split that appeared to help swing the vote. The RFA extends its gratitude to all who supported the measure.”

Amendment 16 will be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service for final approval this fall, and is scheduled to go into effect on May 1, 2010.

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The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. The RFA Mission is to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine, boat and tackle industry jobs, and ensure the long-term sustainability of our Nation’s saltwater fisheries. For more information, call 888-JOIN-RFA or visit www.joinrfa.org.