Improving Stakeholder Participation in the Fisheries Management Process

Patricia Fiorelli
New England Fishery Management Council Staff
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At What Stage Should You Participate?

Committee and Council identify management issues

SCOPING – Council seeks comments on management issues

Committee and Council select options for analysis

Stakeholder Proposals

Input from Advisors

PDT analyzes measures and develops Draft EIS

PUBLIC HEARINGS – and 45-day public comment period

Committee and Council select final measures for submission to NMFS

Public Comment

Input from Advisors
Importance of Effective Participation

- The intent of the Council process is to maximize public participation.
- Greater input helps the Council make better decisions; fishermen’s testimony can produce outcomes that are more palatable to the industry.
- Offer your comments at Council/committee meetings, or send them via snail or email.
Importance of Effective Participation –
(more)

• The Council relies on fishermen’s expertise to complement scientific information and to develop effective management actions.

• Scientific data are not always complete and management options are rarely perfect – community and public participation can lead to better technical solutions.
Why should you participate?

- To provide your expertise and experience
- To be involved in decisions about your livelihood – esp. allocation decisions
- To get the “scoop” firsthand – to understand any new rules under consideration, the legal requirements and the social/economic impacts of management decisions
- To educate and involve others in your community - networking
How can you participate?

- Become involved EARLY in the process
- Get on the Council mail list
- Attend committee and Council meetings when proposals are being developed
- Become an advisor for the fisheries in which you are involved
- Join a local fishermen’s organization; there’s power in numbers!
- Submit comments on management proposals and attend public hearings
- Read trade papers (CFN staff attend and report in detail on most Council meetings)
Guidelines for Providing Public Comments: there are a few rules

- Public comments at Council meetings
- Time limits on comments
- Submission of written materials
- Public input at other types of Council meetings (committees, hearings, etc.)
- Don’t pick fights – the “you people” thing
- Suggest solutions in addition to identifying problems
- Recognize that your fishery observations, although important, could be localized
Other Important Points about Participating

- Communicate with Council members, esp. those from your state, but also may have common ground with others
- Participate in industry group discussions and talk to other stakeholders
- Work with others to develop management proposals and initiatives
- Talk to advisors and attend their meetings
- Talk to Council staff – we can help
Where Can You Get Information?

- Make sure you are on the Council’s mail lists
- Check the NEFMC and NOAA Fisheries/Gloucester websites: www.nefmc.org and www.nero.noaa.gov/nero, (look at links too!)
- Talk to Council members and advisors
- Check facts with the Council staff
- Read fisheries-related publications, not just your hometown paper - very important!
Suggestions? Questions? Concerns?

- If you have ideas about something we can do to promote greater participation, please feel free to contact the staff and let us know your thoughts.
- All input is appreciated.
- Pat Fiorelli - 978.465.0492
  or pfiorelli@nefmc.org