

DRAFT

Policy on (Guidelines for) Information Requests

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

October 12, 2021

While the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC or Commission) is not generally subject to state or federal freedom of information laws, the Commission is dedicated to transparency and broad public access to information.

ASMFC member states have agreed to transparent and open decision-making, record-keeping, and public meeting processes. ASMFC policies and guidelines concerning public participation are set out in detail in the Compact, Rules and Regulations and the Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) Charter. Of particular note, Section 6(c) of the ISFMP Charter sets out detailed provisions for public participation in ASMFC's fishery management process, including requirements for public disclosure of fishery management plan documents, and the preparation of administrative records concerning particular planning decisions.

Much of the publicly available information relating to the Commission's work can readily be accessed at the ASMFC's website, www.asmfc.org. The Commission's website is maintained to provide extensive information on fishery management proceedings, scientific and technical information, ASMFC procedures, and many other topics. For example, links to guiding documents may be found at [Compact and Rules and Regulations](#), [ISFMP Charter](#), [Technical Guidance and Stock Assessment Process](#). Not all documents relevant to fishery management planning is posted on the website. For example public correspondence or data submissions/requests, made to ASMFC staff are not typically available on the website.

For access to such information, members of the public can email the Commission at info@asmfc.org. Within 14 days, ASMFC will acknowledge receipt of the request and provide a timeline for fully responding to the request.

As with any governmental entity, there are limitations regarding the types of information ASMFC is able to make public. For example, fisheries data may be confidential under state or federal law. If ASMFC receives a request related to confidential data, the request will be forwarded to the state or federal agency that originally collected the data. The state or federal agency will determine what data can be made available to the public based on their laws and policies.

In addition to confidential fisheries data, ASMFC may restrict access to certain other types of information in categories regularly withheld from public disclosure by governmental entities. Such information includes deliberative and pre-decisional technical or policy documents, attorney-client privileged documents, as well as personal and personnel information.