Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: American Lobster Management Board

FROM: American Lobster Technical Committee

DATE: July 25, 2016

SUBJECT: Effect of Gauge Changes on Exploitation, SSB, Reference Abundance, and Catch

The following analysis looks at the effect of gauge size changes on egg production, exploitation, spawning stock biomass (SSB), reference abundance, and catch. This work is intended to provide a holistic view of stock and fishery changes that may result from alterations to the minimum and maximum gauge size. Table 1 summarizes scenarios in which a 20% or 60% increase in egg production is achieved, per the motion of the Board at the May 2016 meeting. Tables 2-6 look at all combinations of gauge changes in regards to egg production, exploitation, SSB, reference abundance, and catch.

Table 1. Minimum and maximum size window necessary to achieve a 20% and 60% increase in egg production respectively. Includes % change in exploitation, spawning stock biomass, reference abundance, and catch associated with the size windows presented. *Assumes changes in gauge size from the current 86 mm minimum and 133 mm maximum size inshore, and an 89 mm minimum size and a 171 mm maximum size offshore. English unit conversions are approximate.

	Min	Max	Egg Production	Exploitation	Spawning Stock Biomass	Reference Abundance	Catch
Inshore	88 mm (3 15/32")	105 mm (4 1/8")	20%	-18%	20%	9%	-11%
	91 mm (3 9/16")	115 mm (4 1/2")	18%	-22%	22%	11%	-14%
	92 mm (3 5/8")	165 mm (6 1/2")	20%	-27%	25%	13%	-17%
Offshore	91 mm (3 9/16")	105 mm (4 1/8")	22%	-21%	22%	9%	-13%
	94 mm (3 11/16")	115 mm (4 1/2")	20%	-26%	24%	12%	-17%
	95 mm (3 3/4")	165 mm (6 1/2")	21%	-28%	26%	13%	-19%
Inshore	99 mm (3 7/8")	115 mm (4 1/2")	60%	-56%	71%	32%	-42%
	101 mm (3 29/32")	165 mm (6 1/2")	59%	-59%	76%	35%	-45%
Offshore	102 mm (4")	115 mm (4 1/2")	62%	-60%	71%	31%	-47%
	103 mm (4 1/16")	165 mm (6 1/2")	63%	-63%	75%	34%	-50%

Table 2. Inshore and offshore minimum/maximum gauge change scenarios and corresponding egg production changes from the current gauge sizes. Egg production is expressed as percent increases from the current conditions.

Inshore; Min=86, Max=133

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	2%	-7%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%
83	3%	-6%	-7%	-7%	-7%	-7%	-7%
84	5%	-4%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%
85	8%	-1%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%
86	12%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
87	15%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
88	20%	8%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
89	23%	11%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
90	27%	14%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
91	33%	18%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%
92	39%	22%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
93	46%	28%	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%
94	51%	31%	29%	28%	28%	28%	28%
95	NA	35%	32%	32%	32%	32%	32%
96	NA	40%	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%
97	NA	47%	43%	43%	43%	43%	43%
98	NA	56%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%
99	NA	59%	54%	54%	54%	54%	54%
100	NA	63%	58%	57%	57%	57%	57%
101	NA	69%	63%	62%	62%	62%	62%
102	NA	76%	70%	69%	69%	69%	69%
103	NA	87%	79%	78%	78%	78%	78%
104	NA	91%	82%	81%	81%	81%	81%
105	NA	NA	85%	84%	84%	84%	84%
106	NA	NA	90%	89%	89%	89%	89%
107	NA	NA	97%	96%	95%	95%	95%
108	NA	NA	107%	105%	105%	105%	105%
109	NA	NA	110%	108%	107%	107%	107%
110	NA	NA	113%	111%	110%	110%	110%

Offshore; Min=89, Max=171

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	-7%	-14%	-15%	-16%	-16%	-16%	-16%
83	-6%	-14%	-15%	-15%	-15%	-15%	-15%
84	-3%	-12%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%
85	0%	-9%	-10%	-11%	-11%	-11%	-11%
86	3%	-7%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%
87	6%	-4%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%
88	10%	-1%	-2%	-2%	-2%	-2%	-2%
89	13%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
90	17%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
91	22%	8%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
92	27%	12%	11%	10%	10%	10%	10%
93	34%	18%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
94	39%	20%	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%
95	NA	24%	22%	21%	21%	21%	21%
96	NA	29%	26%	26%	25%	25%	25%
97	NA	35%	32%	31%	31%	31%	31%
98	NA	43%	39%	39%	39%	39%	39%
99	NA	46%	42%	41%	41%	41%	41%
100	NA	50%	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%
101	NA	55%	50%	49%	49%	49%	49%
102	NA	62%	56%	55%	55%	55%	55%
103	NA	72%	64%	64%	63%	63%	63%
104	NA	75%	67%	66%	66%	66%	66%
105	NA	NA	70%	69%	69%	69%	69%
106	NA	NA	75%	74%	73%	73%	73%
107	NA	NA	81%	80%	79%	79%	79%
108	NA	NA	90%	89%	88%	88%	88%
109	NA	NA	92%	91%	90%	90%	90%
110	NA	NA	95%	93%	93%	93%	93%

Table 3. Inshore and offshore minimum/maximum gauge change scenarios and corresponding exploitation changes from the current gauge sizes. Exploitation is expressed as percent increases from the current conditions.

Inshore; Min=86, Max=133

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	7%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%
83	5%	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
84	1%	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
85	-4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%
86	-8%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
87	-13%	-6%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%
88	-18%	-11%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%
89	-22%	-14%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%
90	-26%	-18%	-17%	-17%	-17%	-17%	-17%
91	-31%	-22%	-22%	-21%	-21%	-21%	-21%
92	-37%	-28%	-27%	-27%	-27%	-27%	-27%
93	-43%	-33%	-32%	-32%	-32%	-32%	-32%
94	-46%	-36%	-35%	-35%	-35%	-35%	-35%
95	NA	-39%	-38%	-38%	-38%	-38%	-38%
96	NA	-43%	-42%	-42%	-42%	-42%	-42%
97	NA	-48%	-46%	-46%	-46%	-46%	-46%
98	NA	-54%	-53%	-53%	-52%	-52%	-52%
99	NA	-56%	-54%	-54%	-54%	-54%	-54%
100	NA	-58%	-56%	-56%	-56%	-56%	-56%
101	NA	-61%	-59%	-59%	-59%	-59%	-59%
102	NA	-65%	-63%	-63%	-63%	-63%	-63%
103	NA	-71%	-68%	-68%	-68%	-68%	-68%
104	NA	-72%	-69%	-69%	-69%	-69%	-69%
105	NA	NA	-71%	-70%	-70%	-70%	-70%
106	NA	NA	-73%	-72%	-72%	-72%	-72%
107	NA	NA	-75%	-75%	-75%	-75%	-75%
108	NA	NA	-80%	-79%	-79%	-79%	-79%
109	NA	NA	-81%	-80%	-80%	-80%	-80%
110	NA	NA	-81%	-81%	-81%	-81%	-81%

Offshore; Min=89, Max=171

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	23%	31%	32%	32%	32%	32%	32%
83	21%	29%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
84	16%	24%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
85	11%	20%	20%	21%	21%	21%	21%
86	6%	14%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
87	0%	9%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
88	-6%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
89	-10%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
90	-15%	-5%	-4%	-4%	-4%	-4%	-4%
91	-21%	-11%	-10%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-9%
92	-27%	-16%	-15%	-15%	-15%	-15%	-15%
93	-34%	-23%	-22%	-22%	-22%	-22%	-22%
94	-38%	-26%	-25%	-25%	-25%	-25%	-25%
95	NA	-30%	-28%	-28%	-28%	-28%	-28%
96	NA	-34%	-33%	-33%	-33%	-33%	-33%
97	NA	-40%	-38%	-38%	-38%	-38%	-38%
98	NA	-47%	-45%	-45%	-45%	-45%	-45%
99	NA	-49%	-47%	-47%	-47%	-47%	-47%
100	NA	-52%	-50%	-50%	-49%	-49%	-49%
101	NA	-55%	-53%	-53%	-53%	-53%	-53%
102	NA	-60%	-57%	-57%	-57%	-57%	-57%
103	NA	-66%	-63%	-63%	-63%	-63%	-63%
104	NA	-68%	-64%	-64%	-64%	-64%	-64%
105	NA	NA	-66%	-66%	-66%	-66%	-66%
106	NA	NA	-68%	-68%	-68%	-68%	-68%
107	NA	NA	-72%	-71%	-71%	-71%	-71%
108	NA	NA	-77%	-76%	-76%	-76%	-76%
109	NA	NA	-78%	-77%	-77%	-77%	-77%
110	NA	NA	-79%	-78%	-78%	-78%	-78%

Table 4. Inshore and offshore minimum/maximum gauge change scenarios and corresponding spawning stock biomass (SSB) changes from the current gauge sizes. SSB is expressed as percent increases from the current conditions.

Inshore; Min=86, Max=133

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	-1%	-9%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%
83	0%	-8%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-9%
84	4%	-5%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%
85	7%	-2%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%
86	11%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
87	16%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
88	20%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
89	25%	13%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
90	30%	17%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
91	36%	22%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
92	43%	27%	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%
93	51%	34%	32%	32%	32%	32%	32%
94	57%	38%	36%	36%	36%	35%	35%
95	NA	43%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%
96	NA	49%	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%
97	NA	57%	54%	53%	53%	53%	53%
98	NA	67%	63%	63%	63%	63%	63%
99	NA	71%	67%	66%	66%	66%	66%
100	NA	76%	71%	71%	71%	71%	71%
101	NA	82%	77%	76%	76%	76%	76%
102	NA	90%	84%	84%	84%	84%	84%
103	NA	102%	95%	94%	94%	94%	94%
104	NA	106%	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%
105	NA	NA	102%	101%	101%	101%	101%
106	NA	NA	107%	106%	106%	106%	106%
107	NA	NA	115%	113%	113%	113%	113%
108	NA	NA	125%	124%	124%	124%	124%
109	NA	NA	128%	126%	126%	126%	126%
110	NA	NA	131%	129%	129%	129%	129%

Offshore; Min=89, Max=171

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	-11%	-18%	-19%	-19%	-19%	-19%	-19%
83	-10%	-17%	-18%	-18%	-18%	-18%	-18%
84	-7%	-15%	-16%	-16%	-16%	-16%	-16%
85	-4%	-12%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%
86	0%	-9%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%
87	4%	-6%	-7%	-7%	-7%	-7%	-7%
88	8%	-2%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%
89	12%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
90	17%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
91	22%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
92	29%	15%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
93	36%	21%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%
94	41%	24%	22%	22%	22%	22%	22%
95	NA	28%	26%	26%	26%	26%	26%
96	NA	34%	31%	31%	31%	31%	31%
97	NA	41%	38%	38%	38%	38%	38%
98	NA	50%	47%	46%	46%	46%	46%
99	NA	54%	50%	50%	49%	49%	49%
100	NA	58%	54%	53%	53%	53%	53%
101	NA	64%	59%	59%	59%	59%	59%
102	NA	71%	66%	65%	65%	65%	65%
103	NA	82%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
104	NA	85%	78%	77%	77%	77%	77%
105	NA	NA	82%	81%	81%	81%	81%
106	NA	NA	87%	86%	85%	85%	85%
107	NA	NA	93%	92%	92%	92%	92%
108	NA	NA	103%	101%	101%	101%	101%
109	NA	NA	105%	103%	103%	103%	103%
110	NA	NA	108%	106%	106%	106%	106%

Table 5. Inshore and offshore minimum/maximum gauge change scenarios and corresponding reference abundance changes from the current gauge sizes. Reference abundance is expressed as percent increases from the current conditions.

Inshore; Min=86, Max=133

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	-3%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%
83	-2%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-5%
84	0%	-3%	-4%	-4%	-4%	-4%	-4%
85	2%	-2%	-2%	-2%	-2%	-2%	-2%
86	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
87	6%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
88	9%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
89	11%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
90	13%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
91	16%	11%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
92	19%	14%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
93	23%	17%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%
94	25%	19%	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%
95	NA	21%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
96	NA	23%	22%	22%	22%	22%	22%
97	NA	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
98	NA	31%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
99	NA	32%	31%	31%	31%	31%	31%
100	NA	34%	33%	33%	33%	33%	33%
101	NA	36%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%
102	NA	40%	38%	38%	38%	38%	38%
103	NA	45%	42%	42%	42%	42%	42%
104	NA	46%	43%	43%	43%	43%	43%
105	NA	NA	45%	44%	44%	44%	44%
106	NA	NA	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%
107	NA	NA	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%
108	NA	NA	53%	53%	53%	53%	53%
109	NA	NA	54%	54%	54%	54%	54%
110	NA	NA	55%	55%	55%	55%	55%

Offshore; Min=89, Max=171

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	-8%	-11%	-11%	-11%	-11%	-11%	-11%
83	-8%	-10%	-11%	-11%	-11%	-11%	-11%
84	-6%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-9%	-9%
85	-4%	-7%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%
86	-2%	-5%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%
87	0%	-3%	-4%	-4%	-4%	-4%	-4%
88	2%	-1%	-1%	-2%	-2%	-2%	-2%
89	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
90	6%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
91	9%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
92	12%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%
93	16%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
94	18%	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
95	NA	14%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
96	NA	16%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
97	NA	19%	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%
98	NA	23%	22%	22%	22%	22%	22%
99	NA	25%	23%	23%	23%	23%	23%
100	NA	26%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
101	NA	28%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%
102	NA	31%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
103	NA	36%	34%	34%	34%	34%	34%
104	NA	37%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%
105	NA	NA	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%
106	NA	NA	38%	38%	38%	38%	38%
107	NA	NA	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%
108	NA	NA	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%
109	NA	NA	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%
110	NA	NA	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%

Table 6. Inshore and offshore minimum/maximum gauge change scenarios and corresponding catch changes from the current gauge sizes. Catch is expressed as percent increases from the current conditions.

Inshore; Min=86, Max=133

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	4%	7%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
83	3%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
84	0%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
85	-2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
86	-5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
87	-8%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%
88	-11%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%
89	-14%	-9%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%	-8%
90	-17%	-11%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%
91	-20%	-14%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%	-13%
92	-25%	-18%	-17%	-17%	-17%	-17%	-17%
93	-30%	-22%	-21%	-21%	-21%	-21%	-21%
94	-33%	-24%	-23%	-23%	-23%	-23%	-23%
95	NA	-27%	-26%	-26%	-26%	-26%	-26%
96	NA	-30%	-29%	-29%	-29%	-29%	-29%
97	NA	-34%	-33%	-33%	-33%	-33%	-33%
98	NA	-40%	-39%	-38%	-38%	-38%	-38%
99	NA	-42%	-40%	-40%	-40%	-40%	-40%
100	NA	-44%	-42%	-42%	-42%	-42%	-42%
101	NA	-47%	-45%	-45%	-45%	-45%	-45%
102	NA	-51%	-49%	-49%	-49%	-49%	-49%
103	NA	-58%	-55%	-54%	-54%	-54%	-54%
104	NA	-59%	-56%	-56%	-56%	-56%	-56%
105	NA	NA	-58%	-57%	-57%	-57%	-57%
106	NA	NA	-60%	-60%	-60%	-59%	-59%
107	NA	NA	-63%	-63%	-63%	-63%	-63%
108	NA	NA	-69%	-68%	-68%	-68%	-68%
109	NA	NA	-70%	-69%	-69%	-69%	-69%
110	NA	NA	-71%	-71%	-71%	-71%	-71%

Offshore; Min=89, Max=171

Min Size \ Max size	105	115	125	135	145	155	165
82	13%	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%
83	12%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%
84	9%	13%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%
85	6%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
86	3%	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
87	0%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
88	-4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
89	-6%	-1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
90	-10%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%	-3%
91	-13%	-7%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%	-6%
92	-18%	-11%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%	-10%
93	-24%	-15%	-14%	-14%	-14%	-14%	-14%
94	-27%	-17%	-17%	-16%	-16%	-16%	-16%
95	NA	-20%	-19%	-19%	-19%	-19%	-19%
96	NA	-24%	-23%	-22%	-22%	-22%	-22%
97	NA	-28%	-27%	-27%	-27%	-27%	-27%
98	NA	-35%	-33%	-33%	-33%	-33%	-33%
99	NA	-37%	-35%	-35%	-35%	-35%	-35%
100	NA	-39%	-37%	-37%	-37%	-37%	-37%
101	NA	-42%	-40%	-40%	-40%	-40%	-40%
102	NA	-47%	-44%	-44%	-44%	-44%	-44%
103	NA	-54%	-51%	-50%	-50%	-50%	-50%
104	NA	-56%	-52%	-52%	-52%	-52%	-52%
105	NA	NA	-54%	-54%	-53%	-53%	-53%
106	NA	NA	-56%	-56%	-56%	-56%	-56%
107	NA	NA	-60%	-60%	-60%	-60%	-60%
108	NA	NA	-66%	-66%	-66%	-66%	-66%
109	NA	NA	-67%	-67%	-67%	-67%	-67%
110	NA	NA	-69%	-68%	-68%	-68%	-68%

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

JUL 21 2016

Mr. David Borden, Chair
American Lobster Management Board
c/o Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear David:

Last year was a watershed year in lobster management. The Commission, states, and NOAA Fisheries created the novel Lobster Trap Transfer Database and successfully rolled out the Commission's groundbreaking Trap Transfer Program. In addition, the SNE stock gained new protections as state and federal managers implemented measures to reduce exploitation (Addendum XVII) and reduce traps (Addendum XVIII), with additional protective measures (trap banking and aggregate trap limits in Addenda XXI and XXII) on deck for future implementation.

To date, our SNE management efforts have been recommended and enacted based upon our understanding of the science that existed at the time. That understanding changed with the new stock assessment in 2015. This latest assessment unequivocally shows that the SNE stock is in a continued state of recruitment failure and in far worse condition than previously thought. The assessment and subsequent analyses by the Lobster Technical Committee (TC) indicated that significant reductions in exploitation are needed to stabilize the stock at current levels. Scientists are still trying to better understand the situation, but it appears that our recent SNE management efforts – so promising just a short time ago – may need to be augmented, amended, or altogether redone.

With so much uncertainty, it appears imprudent for us to publish a proposed rule for Federal trap cap and banking measures recommended within the context of the previous stock assessment from 2009. In light of this, we have suspended our Addenda XXI and XXII rulemaking efforts until we have a better understanding of our collective response to the SNE stock assessment. Nevertheless, we will continue to offer trap transferability to the industry as a tool to optimize their businesses and adjust to the annual trap reductions in Areas 2 and 3.

As we enter the next stage of our SNE management program, the TC is presently analyzing potential measures that would result in a 20- to 60-percent increase in SNE egg production. Recall that that Board chose this egg production approach at the May 2016 meeting with the hope that doing so would provide a meaningful response to the recent stock assessment. Although we have not seen the TC's final analysis, we are concerned that an egg production approach may not be measurable and, alone, will not provide sufficient reductions in exploitation to help stabilize the SNE stock. If the TC's report confirms this, we urge the Board to consider further action to adopt additional measures to sufficiently reduce exploitation and foster

recruitment, with a focus on metrics that align more directly with the Lobster Plan's biological reference points, such as effective exploitation and reference abundance.

Finally, lobster harvester reporting is another issue that the Board will discuss at the August meeting. As I stated in my response to the Commission's letter to me on the topic dated May 26, 2016, we agree that improvements in reporting are achievable, however; we believe that such changes should be done through the Commission process and in a manner consistent with the states and the Lobster Plan. I encourage the Board to formally consider the data collection parameters of the Lobster Plan to more effectively address this issue.

Thank you for your interest in and commitment to the conservation of this important fishery and resource.

Sincerely,

John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator

cc: ASMFC American Lobster Management Board

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmfc.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: American Lobster Management Board

FROM: American Lobster Plan Review Team

DATE: July 19, 2016

SUBJECT: Comments on Maine's Conservation Equivalency Proposal

The Plan Review Team (PRT) met via conference call on July 18, 2016 to review Maine's conservation equivalency proposal regarding exchange tags. Below is a summary of the meeting:

PRT Attendees
Kathleen Reardon (ME)
Dan McKiernan (MA)
Allison Murphy (NMFS)
Pete Burns (NMFS)

ASMFC Staff
Megan Ware

The PRT supports Maine's proposal to attach lobster trap tags via hog rings because it improves compliance and enforcement in the lobster fishery. Since this program removes the need for exchange tags, the PRT believes Maine's conservation equivalency proposal will reduce the number of potential counterfeit tags in the water and alleviate the burden on Maine's marine patrol to trace extra tags in the system. Furthermore, given there have been reports of malfunctioning tags in Maine this year, the hog rings provide a useful alternative for fishermen to effectively attach tags to their traps. The PRT notes that this proposal is more conservative than other states which automatically issue Area 1 fishermen 80 extra tags to account for traps being taken in and out of the water.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: American Lobster Management Board

FROM: American Lobster Advisory Panel

DATE: July 19, 2016

SUBJECT: Comments on Maine's Conservation Equivalency Proposal

Comments from the Advisory Panel (AP) regarding Maine's Conservation Equivalency Proposal were submitted via email and telephone on July 18, 2016. Below is a summary of the comments:

AP Members Who Participated
Robert Baines (ME)
Arthur Sawyer (MA)

ASMFC Staff
Megan Ware

Both AP members supported Maine's proposal to attached lobster trap tags with hog rings. One AP member commented that "*the ability to transfer tags from one trap to another has been a time and money saver for those fishermen who need to re-tag traps. It had been an unnecessary burden on marine patrol to issue the new tags and to enforce the proper use of the exchange tags. This new program simply allows a fisherman to use the tags that were originally purchased for the duration of the year.*"