



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

April 13, 2020

**To: Tautog Management Board**  
**From: Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator**  
**RE: Advisory Panel Comments on Rhode Island Conservation Equivalency Proposal**

In preparation of the Tautog Management Board's consideration of the Rhode Island Conservation Equivalency (CE) Proposal in May 2020, Tautog Advisory Panel members provided the following comments via email in April. Two were opposed to the proposal and one expressed concerns more specific to commercial management.

Gregory Jackson (DE): Although this proposal doesn't currently effect DE, I do not support it. I am opposed to different limits for the Charter/Party sector and the recreational sector and I don't want to see this setting a precedent for a similar proposal in DE. Additionally, as pointed out by the PRT, it fails to meet the definition of CE by a reduction in season or larger size limits for the Charter/Party sector. The PRT pointed out it fails to meet other measures required by the Tautog FMP.

Jack Conway (CT): I'm against the concept (the Rhode Island CE proposal), the PRT comments are "spot on". I don't think a 1 fish change to the bag limit will really generate more business and the issue of course is that it will increase landings. In addition, the for-hire fleet in CT and NY will likely want some regulatory relief as well.

Jim Dawson (VA): Protecting the spawning stock is imperative. The "mandatory reporting" is ONLY as good as the enforcement that we all cannot see as to how much these individuals have been checked at the docks etc. to ensure that the call-in actually is working. When unchecked, are they actually reporting? This is the unknown we deal with as I personally see within the black sea bass February opening in Virginia, we HAVE a LOT of illegal fishing going on; law enforcement is not there. I also am seeing hooks and fresh bait coming from these fish as a commercial fisherman understanding that pressures are in fact being placed on ALL species because the people are just not all being "honest". No offense to anyone, being a mathematician, it is another factor that MUST enter the equation of "unreported" tautog being caught.

We also should consider each region if we are considering just one! Why isn't each region being allowed to adjust its particular fisheries much in the same way? Here in Virginia, we have commercially lost our complete fishery due specifically to over-regulation based from old data 1988-1993 that did not consider the hook and line fishermen and ONLY used data from a trawler poundage within those dates. With now over 20 years of VTR data we could review our region's fisheries in the southern regions to allow us to fish once again. Currently, our fisheries management has put us completely out of business in more ways that I could expand on, but my personal number will explain themselves quite well.

Fairness and equality should be for all. So, as long as we consider everyone up and down the coast, I have no problems if fisheries considers everyone involved and not just some.

M20-41