



**Atlantic States
Marine Fisheries**
COMMISSION

Conservation Equivalency Policy and Guidelines

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

ISFMP Policy Board May 2025



Stock Status Determination

- Was the intention to review the use of CE after EACH stock assessment (benchmark or update)
 - Was the intention to consider the use of CE after each stock assessment even if the stock status did not change?



Process to Evaluate Conservation Equivalency

- Add a new section to the CE Policy to clarify the process to evaluate the use of CE
 - Ensures reviews are done consistently and provide boards the information to make informed decisions



Suggested Changes

in annual FMP Reviews, unless different timing is approved by the board.¶

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~~Management boards should place a limit on the length of time that a conservation equivalency program can remain in place without re-approval by the board.~~ The board will evaluate conservation equivalency programs after each stock assessment. ~~s if the stock status has changed.~~ Some approved management programs may require additional data to evaluate effects of the management measures. The burden of collecting the data falls on the state that has implemented such a conservation equivalency program. Approval of a conservation equivalency program may be

TK

Toni Kerns

Based on the Board discussion in 2023 this should have been deleted.¶

TK

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Based on the 2023 discussion after each assessment the Board should determine if the use of CE has changed regardless of stock status. The Board discussion focused on each assessment and did not discuss state changing.¶

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Suggested Changes

terminated if the state is not completing the necessary monitoring to evaluate the effects of the program.¶

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Conservation equivalency proposals and board approval are not required when states adopt a single more restrictive measure than those required in the FMP (e.g., higher minimum size, lower bag limit, lower quota, lower trip limit, closed or shorter seasons), as long as it does not have impacts to another measure (e.g., in striped bass changing the size limit in the commercial fishery can also trigger a quota adjustment). These changes to the management program will be included in a state's annual compliance report or state implementation plan. If states intend to change more than one regulation where one is more restrictive but the other is less restrictive, even if the combined impact is more restrictive, states must submit a conservation equivalency proposal for Board approval. ~~due to unexpected consequences that may arise (e.g., a larger minimum size limit could increase discards)~~.¶

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When Conservation Equivalency will not be Permitted¶

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Stock Status Determination

combined impact is more restrictive, states must submit a conservation equivalency proposal for Board approval. ~~due to unexpected consequences that may arise (e.g., a larger minimum size limit could increase discards).~~

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When Conservation Equivalency will not be Permitted

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Stock Status Conditions

The board will consider if a change in the use of conservation equivalency is necessary after each stock assessment. ~~where,~~ Conservation Equivalency is not permitted if the stock is overfished or depleted, unless allowed by a board via a 2/3 majority vote (the rules on voting in Article II, Section 1 of the Rules and Regulations apply). ~~If the board determines conservation equivalency is not permitted, it will apply to future actions of the board and existing conservation equivalency programs.~~ The board can determine if conservation equivalency is not permitted across the entire FMP or for a specific sector of the fishery within the FMP, (e.g., commercial measures or recreational measures).

Measures that cannot be Quantified

Only measures that have a quantifiable impact on achieving the FMP standards will be considered when calculating and approving conservation equivalency proposals. Measures that can't be quantified can be implemented as a buffer but will not be considered in conservation equivalency calculation credit. The state submitting a proposed measure for credit must be able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the TC,

TK

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Confirming it was the Board's intention for this to be after each assessment, **regardless if stock status has changed or not**

TK

Toni Kerns

Should this be revised because the Board does need to evaluate the current CE programs if the ability to use CE changes. See new text at the end of the document

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There were specific comments on the record that a decision to restrict **would** apply to currently existing CE programs



Stock Status Changes

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Process to Evaluate Conservation Equivalency

- **Post Stock Assessment Evaluation Process**

After the presentation of a new stock assessment, staff will remind the Board of the current conservation equivalency status for the FMP. This will include if conservation equivalency is allowed under the FMP, including any sector specific limits/requirements and a list of active conservation equivalency programs. The Board will determine if a change to the conservation equivalency allowance is needed or if additional information is necessary to make a determination. If conservation equivalency is no longer allowed under the FMP, the Board will determine a timeframe for states with existing conservation equivalency programs to adjust regulations back to the standards of the FMP.



FMPs with CE Restrictions

- How to apply the rules of the FMP and the CE Policy together
 - A FMP could have stock conditions which apply to CE but may not include all the details of the CE Policy.



Assessment Results presented, if the stock is overfished/depleted the Board may allow for CE use by 2/3 vote otherwise it is not permitted

- Staff presents the use of CE in accordance of the policy, any specific requirements of the FMP, and a brief overview of existing CE programs in use
 - # years, if program is meeting its intended goals, if the state is collecting and reporting data per the proposal
- Board may determine if the use of CE is no longer allowed The option to limit CE use can be by sector



Existing CE Program Questions

Does the Board intend to allow existing CE programs to continue if CE is no longer allowed?

1. Is it automatic if CE is no longer allowed, by default of the policy, existing programs must end and revert to FMP standards
2. The Board is required to include direction on existing CE programs in the motion that does or does not allow the use of CE
 1. If existing CE programs are allowed, are all programs allowed or will the Board review and decide on programs individually?



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Law Enforcement Committee Report to ISFMP Policy Board

May 8, 2025

- **Bluefish** - Staff updated the LEC on the Technical Committee's trial use of the Risk and Uncertainty Tool. Specifically, questions related to Compliance and Enforcement ratings.
- **Atlantic Striped Bass** – The LEC conducted a virtual meeting on March 27, 2025, to discuss questions posed by the Striped Bass PDT. These questions related to enforcement of certain management measures considered in the development of Draft Addendum III.

- **NHFG Case Study** – Lt. Delayne Brown of the NHFG Law Enforcement Division provide a case study of two striped bass pulse operations from the Summer of 2024.

Connecticut Encon Police

➤ K-9 Luna

SCDNR Saltwater Team

➤ Team Effort



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Questions?