# PROCEEDINGS OF THE

# ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

# AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD

**The Westin Crystal City**
**Arlington, Virginia**
**Hybrid Meeting**

**May 4, 2026**

**Approved August 4, 2026**

TABLE OF CONTENT

**INDEX OF MOTIONS**

1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).

2. **Approval of Proceedings of October 2025** by consent (Page 1).

3. **Move to approve the nominations to the Steering Committee on Lobster MSE** (Page 15). Motion by Carl Wilson; second by Jay McNamee. Motion passed by unanimous consent (Page 16).

4. **Move to approve the nomination of Chris Townsend from Massachusetts to the Lobster Advisory Panel to replace Eric Lorentzen** (Page 18). Motion by Bob Glenn; second by Joe Cimino. Motion passed by unanimous consent (Page 18).

5. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 18).

## ATTENDANCE

### Board Members

Carl Wilson, ME (AA)
Steve Train, ME (GA)
Rep. Allison Hepler, ME (LA)
Renee Zobel, NH (AA)
Doug Grout, NH (GA)
Dennis Abbott, NH, proxy for Sen. Watters (LA)
Bob Glenn, MA, proxy for D. McKiernan (AA)
Raymond Kane, ME (GA)
Sarah Peake, MA, proxy for Rep. Armini (LA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)
David Borden, RI (GA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)
Shanna Madsen, CT (AA)
Robert LaFrance, CT, proxy for J. Gresko (LA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)
John Maniscalco, NY, proxy for M. Gary (AA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)
Monica Martinez, NY (LA)
Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)
John Clark, DE (AA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Michael Luisi, MD, proxy for k. Charbonneau (AA)
Joe Grist, VA (Acting AA)
Allison Murphy, NMFS

**(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)**

### Ex-Officio Members

Tracy Pugh, Technical Committee Chair
Rob Beal, Law Enforcement Committee Rep.

### Staff

Bob Beal
Toni Kerns
Tina Berger
Madeline Musante
Caitlin Starks
Tracey Bauer
James Boyle
Chelsea Tuohy
Katie Drew
Jainita Patel
Jeff Kipp
Samara Nehemiah

The American Lobster Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Monday, May 4, 2026, and was called to order at 10:45 a.m. by Chair Renee Zobel.

**CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR RENEE ZOBEL: Okay, I'm going to call the Lobster Board to order, good morning. It feels a little bit strange. Usually, I'm the one to welcome us and open up the meeting, so I appreciate a slightly southern species doing that this morning, giving us a minute here. Welcome to the Lobster Board, look forward to the discussions today. I'm first going to go to Toni Kerns, if we have any Commissioners online.

MS. TONI KERNS: Oh yes, hopefully I'll do a little better this time than last time. We have John Maniscalco and Monica Martinez from New York, and Rob LaFrance is on from Connecticut. I think that is everybody.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Toni is testing me, Rob LaFrance is in the room, I could have sworn I saw him earlier, so thank you. We're going to jump right into our consent items this morning.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

CHAIR ZOBEL: The first item is the approval of the agenda. Does anyone have any changes to the agenda as we have in front of us today? Seeing no changes; the agenda is approved.

**APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS**

CHAIR ZOBEL: Moving on to the approval of the proceedings from our last meeting, our February meeting. Does anybody have any edits, comments on the meeting proceedings from February. Seeing none; we'll consider the proceedings approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The next item on the agenda is public comment for items that are not on the agenda this morning. Do we have any public comment for items not on the agenda? I'll first look to the room. Seeing none in the room, do we have anyone online? No hands online, we're moving right along.

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON BOARD TASKS**

CHAIR ZOBEL: The next item is a Technical Committee Report on Board Tasks. We have Tracy Pugh online. Tracy, are you all set?

DR. TRACY PUGH: Yes, I am all set. Thanks everybody. We are going to go over two tasks from the Board.

**GULF OF MAINE/GEORGES BANK FISHERY PROJECTIONS WITH ORIGINAL ADDENDUM XXVII GAUGE INCREASES**

DR. TRACY PUGH: The first is the larger one, and the task essentially from the Board was to estimate the benefits to the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank fishery that would have resulted from implementing the minimum gauge size increases under Addendum XXVII that were ultimately repealed. As a reminder, those gauge changes in Year 1 would have been an increase in the minimum gauge size from 3-1/4 inches to 3-5/16 of an inch for Year 1. In Year 3 there would have been a minimum legal-size increase from 3-5/16 to 3-3/8 of an inch, again Area 1. Year 4 there would have been an increase in the vent sizes in Area 1, so going to slightly larger rectangular vents then slightly larger circular vents. Then in Year 5 there would have been a decrease in the maximum gauge size for Area 3 and Area OCC from 6-3/4 down to 6-1/2 inch.

The challenge with the task as originally worded was that the scheduled implementation that originally had started in 2024, so the very original schedule. That first gauge change would have happened in 2024, but the second gauge would have happened in 2026. This kind of left us with a little bit of a challenge, in terms of the data that we would use to do these analyses.

We would have had pretty uncertain data from the terminal year of the stock assessment, so the 2024 data with the terminal year relatively uncertain. Then there is a significant amount of uncertainty in the projection of recruitment moving forward. To try to move forward with analysis from the original implementation schedule, the TC felt like there was a pretty high degree of uncertainty that would not really have provided a very useful analysis.

What we decided to do was essentially to work with an earlier implementation schedule, so that we would have data to work with. This would let us use recruitment in fishing mortality estimates coming out of the 2025 assessment. The focus with this is really to provide short term estimate of impacts of these management measures.

Just as a note, we did not attempt to model any kind of a relationship between the lobsters that would be newly protected with these, and any resulting egg production or young-of-year settlement success. There is no stock recruit relationship in these analyses.

The approach that we used is again this earlier implementation schedule, so the Year 1 of the minimum gauge increase would happen in 2019. Year 3 then would happen in 2021. The vent size increase in Year 4 would be 2022, and then the Year 5 maximum gauge decrease would happen in 2023.

For these analyses we used a simulation model, and we started this model out with the model estimated size structure coming out of the stock assessment for Quarter 1 in 2018. To do this we had to modify the model size bins. If you remember from the stock assessment, the size bins we normally use are 5mm increments. In order to do this analysis, we needed to make modifications to get those size bins down to 1mm increments.

This was a little bit of a lift, got it done, and this is going to let us capture those small changes in the gauge size. To capture the changes in gauge size and vent size we did the commercial selectivities, and again then we used recruitment in fishing mortality estimates for 2018 through 2023 coming from the stock assessment.

Then for recruitment going forward we used the equivalent of the smooth trend that was developed for the stock assessment projections. That was the trend that the TC and the SAS felt was the most appropriate for projection recruitment forward. For fishing mortality from 2024 to 2030 we averaged quarterly fishing mortality from the time series. Essentially what we did was compare the results of two scenarios here. The first scenario, the Unchanged Scenario, and in this we didn't make any changes to existing gauge or vent sizes. Then the Change Scenario essentially implements those changes in the earlier implementation schedule I just showed you, starting in 2019. Most of the results are focused on 2018 through 2023, but we could carry some of them forward through 2030.

Essentially, we're trying to look at what the catch composition is going to look like if these changes had occurred. We also then looked at the relative change in catch by numbers, so by number of lobsters landed and by weight of those lobsters landed through 2030. We looked at the results from the Changed Scenario over Unchanged Scenario for reference abundance in spawning stock biomass.

Then we also take a look at how it affects exploitation from 2018 through 2030. In addition to the simulation work, Maine DMR did an analysis using their sea sampling data, so a more straightforward analysis with the sea sampling data, to try to understand what the first decline in the gauge change would do with the decline in landings by quarter and Maine fishing zone. We'll show those results also.

I've just sort of selectively pulled a couple of representative graphs and tables out of the report, I'm not showing all of them. For all of it you will have to go to the report. This first one is looking at change in landings by weight. The graph on the right, if you look it is showing essentially the percent of the landings by weight by size. The X axis is size in millimeters, and the Y axis is percent of landings by weight.

The dark coloring of the curve in here is the Unchanged scenario, and then the orangish gold color is the Change scenario. Then there are little stars for 2019 to 2021, those are Years 1 and 3 of the gauge change, 2022 that is the vent change year, and then 2023 is the maximum change year. Essentially what we're seeing here is that for each year of the Change the landings lose those smallest previously legal-size lobsters.

You can see the orange curve essentially shifted to the right relative to the Unchanged gray curve. The weight of the landings increased as they shift to larger sizes compared to the Unchanged scenario. This sort of stabilizes after, about Year 4, so we start to see the same outcome after Year 4 of the implementation schedule.

This table is showing for Years 2018 through 2030. The first column there is the difference in number and then the right-hand column is the difference in weight. Again, these percentages, these numbers are all in comparison to the Unchanged scenario value for that year. Again, I've highlighted the gauge changes event using the max size change happens.

What we're seeing here, each year of that Change the catch decreases in both the numbers and the weight relative to the Unchanged. But then there is a little bit of a recoup in the alternate years. In 2019, the first year of the Change you can see that drop in catch numbers and in catch weight, 2020 it is not as big of a difference, so they've recouped a little bit.

This happens more in the weight than in the numbers, because those lobsters are growing into the newly harvestable size range they really weigh more. You can see essentially as the implementation schedule plays out that the values tend to stabilize after Year 4, after that vent change year. Ultimately, what we're seeing here is about a 4 to 5% fewer in numbers in the catch, but 6% higher in weight in the catch. Again, that is in comparison to the Unchanged scenario.

This slide shows the market categories. We thought it would be useful to have a look at what this does to the different market categories. The graphic on the right, Chicks are in the yellow color, Quarters are in the green, Halves are in the blue, Selects in orange and then Jumbos in the black. On the bottom the X axis is here, so this is only showing 2018 through 2025.

The left-hand side of the graph is the Unchanged scenario; the right-hand side of the graph is the Changed scenario. What we're seeing here is that the impact to the market category is happening mostly in the Chicks, Quarters and Halves. We see the percent of the landings that would be considered Chicks decreases from around 50% in the Unchanged scenario to around about 33% in that Changed scenario.

Then the Quarters increases about 27% of the composition to about 35% of the composition. The Halves increases from around 11% to around 16%. You see a little bit of change in the Selects and the Jumbos are mostly unchanged. Essentially, you lose a little bit out of the Chicks and then essentially you catch them back as they've grown into the Quarters and the Halves categories.

This is reference abundance and spawning stock biomass. The table on the left is the change in reference abundance, the table on the right is the change in spawning stock biomass. Again, the values in the table are in comparison to the Unchanged scenario. Essentially what we're seeing again, you are protecting the smaller individuals. Essentially, that is keeping them in that reference abundance, so reference abundance starts to increase after the first year of Change relative to the Unchanged scenario.

Once that implementation schedule has sort of played out, ultimately what we see is about a 16% increase in the reference abundance, and then about a 46% increase in spawning stock biomass compared to the Unchanged scenario. Reference abundance, it's mostly sizes from minimum legal size to around 90 millimeters that are being impacted in the reference abundance.

In the spawning stock biomass, it is a broader size range that is affected, up to about 120 millimeters, and this is essentially a combination of the size change along with increasing maturity at minimum sizes, and then the females were able to egg out and get v-notched, and so they gain those extra protections from the egg bearing and the v-notch status.

Then just again as a reminder, there is no stock recruit feedback relationship here so we are not trying to model any kind of supplements, egg production and young-of-year settlement, and then ultimately recruitment based on these new projections. Looking at exploitation.

The graph essentially is showing in the black line that is the Unchanged scenario, and then the orange line is the Changed scenario. This is for years 2018 through 2030, and it is just the exploitation, which is landings and by reference abundance. You can see the newest individuals here are no longer being landed, but they remain in Reference Abundance, so essentially these results decrease expectations compared to the Unchanged scenario. The results of simulation suggest that implementation of the management changes would decrease exploitation below the overfishing threshold.

This table essentially shows a comparison in 2021 the TC did an analysis, I think in support of developing Addendum XXVII, and we were asked to provide values for what happens to the catch in numbers, catch in weight, what happened to the spawning stock biomass, so pretty similar request.

There were pretty big differences, but there were definite differences between what we did in '21 and what we've done with this current analysis, in terms of the parameters that we used. Things like the size resolution. I mentioned earlier that we had to go to a 1-millimeter resolution in our size bins in order to pull this off.

The 2021 analysis we did not do that; we stuck with the 5-millimeter size bins. The other things that are different are, we've got differences in growth, maturity, selectivities and recruitment, all of these things coming from the updated 2025 stock assessment. Then in the 2021 analysis we did not include any escape vent aspect with that.

If you look at the table, essentially this gives the estimated ultimate impact. Again, this is once that implementation schedule has sort of played out. This is where we end up. You can see they are pretty similar. The eventual results are really similar in directionality as what we did in the past, and you see a decrease in the catch by numbers but ultimately an increase in catch by weight.

The difference in scale is not very big at all. The two analyses essentially told a very similar story. Maine DMR, what they did here is to look at just the impact of the very first gauge change, so that first year of implementation going from 3-1/4 to 3-5/16 of an inch or from 83mm to 84mm.

The data they used was from 2016 to 2021; this is from again the Maine Sea Sampling Data. The graph on the right shows along the X axis is the fishing zone going from Zone G all the way up to Zone A. The different shades of green are different Quarters, so light green is January through March, the darkest is October to December.

Then the value of the percent decrease in the trip catch weight. You can see it by Quarter and then the black line with the numbers above it 7.48, 7.7 et cetera, those are the Quarter combined estimates of decrease. Again, so this is very much focused on that first-year impact. What you can see here with the impact in that first year did vary by quarter and by Maine fishing zone.

Essentially the range of estimates was from about 7.4% to about 8.9% decrease in trip catch weight. This is actually pretty similar, it is just slightly higher of an impact estimated than what we got with the simulation exercise that I just showed you for that first year of Change. The simulation analysis estimated about a 6.6 decrease in weight in Year 1. That is just a little bit below what the Maine DMR analysis is giving us here.

In summary, the simulation studies that we've run here show that implementation of management changes ultimately resulted in an increase in reference abundance and in spawning stock biomass compared to the Unchanged scenario. Nearly all of these estimated impacts were driven by increases in minimum legal size, not the decreases in max size, and this is primarily because the vast majority of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank stock are smaller than the sizes that are impacted by the maximum size changes.

The impacts are more pronounced in spawning stock biomass than in abundance, because at their sizes that are impacted at minimum legal size, the proportion of females that are mature is rapidly increasing, so little changes in the legal size get you really big changes in the proportion of females that are mature.

This allows many more mature females to spawn prior to harvest, and then those mature females gain the additional protections by becoming egg bearing and for those that are v-notched they get that v-notch protection. Ultimately, landings numbers decrease, but the weight of these increases relative to the Unchanged scenario.

Catch does decrease in the implementation years, but once the changes have completed, so once the implementation schedule has played out, the protected lobsters grow into the larger harvestable size range and you harvest them at bigger weights. The market category, Chicks are to some extent replaced by Quarters and Halves.

Then we did see an exploitation estimated to decline below the overfishing threshold. Now on this last point I do want to make a note here. If you remember, gauge change was, so the real gauge change with Addendum XXVII was delayed until 2025. The implementation was ultimately not going to happen until 2025.

The assessment terminal year was 2023. If the gauge change had ultimately not been revoked and had played out, that would have happened after the assessment had already been finished. The outcome of the assessment would not have been effective had the gauge changes actually gone through as originally planned. It just the gauge changes sort of started us in the right direction, in terms of decreasing exploitation. That's all I have; I can take questions.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Thank you, Tracy, and thank you for the response to the Board's request. That was a lot of hard work and I appreciate the document and all the analyses. I am going to open it up to the Board for questions. First, I see Jason McNamee.

DR. JASON McNAMEE: Thanks, Tracy, and also Happy Star Wars Day, Tracy.

DR. PUGH: May the 4th be with you!

DR. McNAMEE: This was just amazing work. This was like so fun to read and kind of think about. Thanks to the Technical Committee and all the folks who worked on this, really, really appreciate it. This is just maybe kind of digging into the weeds. It just wasn't clear to me. The question that I kind of was left with was, and you mentioned this.

You didn't model recruitment, but I think I read in the documentation that you could make an assumption that recruitment would see a benefit. The part that I was having a little trouble making that connection to was, so you expand your spawning stock biomass, and that would be a benefit. You would conceivably get more recruitment, all of the other environmental things going on notwithstanding. But the part that I was struggling with was, you kind of shift the harvest into larger size classes.

Like you showed that in that stacked bar plot there, you know the harvest goes down in the Chick category but goes up in the bigger ones, except for Jumbos. Do you still get that expansion in SSB, or is there some offset because you've shifted the harvest to the bigger sizes? Hopefully there is a question in there that you can make sense of.

DR. PUGH: Yes, I think so. I think if we want to flip back to that market category slide it might be useful. It's essentially these are, so the catch in numbers goes down a little bit. You are not landing as much individuals, and those individuals that you are landing are bigger, they are heavier. I'm trying to wrap my brain around how to express what I think you're asking about and the answer to it, Jay.

Like spawning stock biomass goes up. The harvest here is switching, so those animals that you do land end up being a little bit larger. The market category definitions don't change, it's just you don't land as many in the Chicks category, because now more of them have gotten bigger before you land them. There is more distributed in Quarters and Halves.

The SSB going up essentially will put more eggs and larvae in the water. Then like you said, then the environmental things kind of come along and play out as to how many of those actually successfully settle into young lobsters and live to grow up, which is what we did not model? I think I wandered all around the question, Jay. I'm not entirely sure I actually answered it.

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, maybe just a quick follow. Is it your sense that the SSB increase out paces kind of the harvest? The harvest goes down as you guys showed overall, but you do get, you know this expansion and the weight of harvest. I guess that was, I am trying to figure out if the expansion of the population outpaces that kind of shift onto the older lobsters, I guess. Maybe its not answerable and that's the problem.

DR. PUGH: I mean I think we're using the F estimates from the assessment timeline, so we're not... Jeff, if you've got a clear answer to this to help me with my struggles, it would be appreciated.

MR. JEFF J. KIPP: Yes, what I can add to that is, I think if you look at the SSB increases in that table it will stabilize. After a number of years as these changes go in and things change in the exploitation of lobsters at different size categories, you'll see those fluctuations in SSB. But as you get a year or two beyond the implementation of these changes, the SSB stabilizes.

I would interpret that as things sort of level out, not necessarily that the population is outpacing the growth and the weight of the population is outpacing the weight removed by the fishery. I think it all kind of finds its way, works its way out and then stabilizes. That is why you see that in the longer-term projections of SSB.

DR. PUGH: Thank you, Jeff.

MS. ZOBEL: Next up I have David Borden.

MR. DAVID V.D. BORDEN: I have some general comments, but I'm going to stick with the questions, because that is what you asked for. Basically, the question Tracy is since it shifts the size structure of a population, did the Technical Committee look at any of the marketing implications of that at all, any of the economics? Jeff is shaking his head no.

MS. PUGH: No, we did not. I think that marketing and economic exploitations are a little bit outside of our wheelhouse. I think that would be something that would be a next stage, but no, we did not look at that.

MR. BORDEN: That's my only question, but I've got some comments when you're ready.

MS. ZOBEL: Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: David covered my question, thanks.

MS. ZOBEL: Next, to Carl Wilson.

MR. CARL WILSON: Good morning, and thanks again for a very informative report. My question is around the changes in spawning stock biomass with the weight 6 % increase over the 7 years of the simulation. Do you have off the top of your head, or could we get what the loss in spawning stock biomass was during the last assessment period? I know we concentrate a lot on abundance, but how much if this had gone forward, would we have offset the natural declines in the population that we've seen?

DR. PUGH: I don't have those numbers right off. Spawning stock biomass did come down, the assessment results showed. Again, it is important to remember, Carl, the implementation schedule here. If it had gone through, I think it would have been like July 1st would have been when the gauge-change actually went through. That would not have made any changes to the outcome of the stock assessment.

But yes, I mean you see here that relative to the Unchanged scenario you do see a pretty dramatic increase to spawning stock biomass here. Whether that would have been enough to sort of either stabilizes or offset declines that we did see with the assessment, I'm not sure this analysis doesn't really ask that question. Jeff, do you have anything to add to that?

MR. KIPP: One of the things we did here is we kind of adjusted the timeline, so the timeline doesn't necessarily match what the reality of the implications schedule would have been. That is because of our uncertainty in recruitment and those reasons. If I'm thinking through your question, it would be, basically, if this had played out in real time, what would we have seen the SSB do? I think to answer that question we would probably have to move that implementation timeline to say, in reality if we had kind of put in these regulation changes. Go ahead.

MR. WILSON: I guess I was just looking at the simulation where it's going from 2018 through 2023, which is roughly the timeframe of the last assessment. During that last assessment we saw a change in spawning stock biomass. Just wondering what that delta was.

DR. PUGH: I don't know what the delta was. I am getting a little bit of feedback here from Burton, who did the bulk of these analyses. With this analysis starting in 2018 as the start point. If you think of the Unchanged scenario as being sort of status quo, and the Change scenario being, okay if we had made these changes starting in 2018, then yes, we might have been a little bit above. We wouldn't have not seen the decreases in spawning stock biomass that we did.

MR. WILSON: Thank you.

DR. PUGH: I think that is my understanding of what Burton was trying to tell me via text here. Thank you, Burton. This is a team sport.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Go to Bob Glenn.

MR. BOB GLENN: Tracy, question for you. Did the TC assume that fishing effort remained constant in this analysis?

DR. PUGH: Yes, I think so. We used essentially the average quarterly F from the entire time series. The whole time series, going back to 1982. From what I understand is, that F, once we got that averaged by quarter, that F was applied to each quarter in the simulation constantly.

MR. GLENN: Just a quick follow up. Based on that, would you expect that any type of compensatory response in fishing effort in response to the gauge increases would impact the results? I guess my concern is that your results may be a little bit overoptimistic in the spawning stock biomass, because in response to the initial reduction in landings if the industry were to ramp up effort to compensate for that, I suspect that some of those increases would be ameliorated.

DR. PUGH: I think that's plausible. It is really difficult to try to understand how the industry would react to changes, and to what extent they can recoup. But yes, I think that anytime we do these simulation analyses and we have to make assumptions and hold things. It is important to remember that these are estimates, and these are estimates making a fair amount of assumptions around both the environmental conditions that are sort of behind this that we're kind of holding stable in this instance, or fishing behavior.

MS. ZOBEL: I'm going to go to Burton online who has his hand up; I assume in relation to some of these questions we've been having.

DR. PUGH: Oh, great.

MR. BURTON SHANK: Bob, in response to your question. The time series mean for fishing mortality is 2.65, which equates to an exploitation rate of about 90%. There really isn't anywhere for industry to ramp up to. I mean that would take a lot to significantly increase that exploitation rate. Understanding that that is an exploitation rate that is defined differently than the way we use it in the stock assessment.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Steve Train.

MR. STEPHEN TRAIN: Dr. Pugh, I'm going to ask you to do a little forward thinking, if you don't mind, because it's where I'm looking at this. We didn't do any of this. This is what would have happened, it's where we would be theoretically. Is there any other tool in our tool box, the term we like to use so much, that could increase spawning stock biomass on a species that quickly with so little economic impact to the fishery? I'm just wondering if this continues a downturn where we go.

DR. PUGH: I think that is a reasonable question. I'm not sure that I can answer it, which is unsatisfactory for you guys, I'm sure. The TC is very focused on our analyses in relation to the resource itself. The economics are a challenge. We are not socioeconomic experts, so it is really outside of our wheelhouse.

But when you think about the tools that you do have in your toolbox, this is a quick and easy, and they do grow into harvestable range. I would say these are short term, relatively painful, but then the following years after the animals have grown into it then you recoup that in the weight. The other tools that you have to do this, you know I'm not sure, Steve, sorry.

I don't have a good response for that one. Cuts in traps would probably have to be extremely significant to start to see these kinds of gains, especially since with spawning stock biomass you're really getting these gains in increasing maturity in the size range. The middle legal size right now for Area 1 is right in the steepest part of that maturity ogive.

Like I said, little changes in the middle legal size right now gets you really big changes in the proportion of females that are mature as you go up that. That is why you see this rapid increase in spawning stock biomass, more so than you see it in reference then.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Any other questions at the moment from the Board? Jason, go ahead.

DR. McNAMEE: This is probably more of a comment than a question. I think I really appreciated this analysis. I think we've got some really good insights from it. Now I was just kind of thinking forward to the application, you know of this information. I guess it's on the agenda, so I won't jump ahead too far.

But I see this type of analysis in the work has been really helpful to potentially set some future management strategy evaluation. You know you

are kind of looking at these tradeoffs indirectly. It feels like a good sort of start to that type of analysis. I guess I take from this that some of the machinery to do this sort of thing is built already, which would be helpful.
I guess maybe the question part could be, if any of what I just said isn't accurate, I could be corrected. But I'll just offer that as a comment, seems like a nice step towards a management strategy evaluation, where we could look at tradeoffs between different management strategies that we might look at. It kind of gets back to the question that Steve just asked a moment ago too. You can sort of see, like catch that question that we ask.

DR. PUGH: Yes, just really quickly. I think that the work that Burton put into the really the growth, and dealing with getting from a 5-millimeter size to a 1-millimeter size then is a big step forward. I think that the TC was thinking about this exercise with the future in mind, in terms of being able to set ourselves up to answer questions like this moving forward.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Carl Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Just continuing on Jason's theme of how this can fold into our ongoing conversations and MSE evaluations in the future. But I think we do have a pretty significant economic question out there on what these analyses would do, whether it be for the market categories, as we've already talked about trade issues within the United States, trade issues between U.S. and Canada and abroad.

I guess a question for the Board is, I wasn't particularly planning on this but it seems relevant. Is there a group that we can pull together that might address some of the economic and market implications of this work, but also kind of in support of the MSE discussions, or is that the Subcommittee?

CHAIR ZOBEL: Yes, Carl let's say let's hold your question for right now, or that question back to the Board, finish with the questions for Tracy and then we'll circle back, and I'll circle back to you, David, as well for comments. Are there any other questions for Tracy right not for the Board?
I do want to go out to the public for a few questions, if there are any members of the public that have a question for Tracy around this report back to the Board. Okay, seeing no questions I'm going to go back to David for your comment, and then maybe Carl, we can have a brief discussion on that.

MR. BORDEN: I didn't want to do this before, but I would like to complement the Technical Committee on the fine work. I would say without a doubt this is the best work that I've seen done on this subject ever, and I don't think that is an exaggeration. I really think they have excelled at it.

I particularly like the fact that they tested it against a prior analysis and considered some parameters that were very different than had been considered in the prior analysis, and yet the results were basically validated in my own mind, the prior strategy. Now, I think that those of us around the table that have been at this for a long period of time can agree to disagree on the increments of change for regulations.

I think that was kind of fair game, but I particularly like the fact that the technical people standardized this based on a millimeter, which I think is a really reasonable way to affect change on a regulation of this order. I really take my hat off to the technical folks, outstanding work. I think we can take it a step further, as Carl Wilson indicated. I think we should look at some of the market implications of it. As Jason already said, maybe we can do that as part of an MSE or pull together a separate committee. Off the top of my head, I cannot think of another management measure that we could implement, especially if you implement it over gradually, two or three years a millimeter.

How you can implement a change that is going to increase the SSB to this extent with this little pain for the industry. Keep in mind, I think, and this goes back to the point that Carl raised. The SSB is changing and egg viability is changing. There was a paper that came out here recently about ocean acidification and the potential impacts that has on egg viability.

There are a lot of good reasons to have larger size animals, we get their eggs and potentially increasing viability in a changing environment. I think ought to factor those types of points into the deliberation, and eventually figure out a strategy on how to move something ahead.

The last point is, if this had not gone out to the LCMTs I would request it be sent out to the LCMT members. I'm sure Carl has sent it out to his own council members, but if not then it should go to the Zone Council members at a minimum.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Carl Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Just a comment of kind of pulling us a little bit out of simulation and results into just a little bit of introducing some reality of, if we had implemented the gauge increase last year, as was proposed. As it was in 2025, we had approximately about a 10% decline in landings and a 20% decline in value.

If we had introduced another 5 to 10% decline in weight or numbers, we have an industry that is now in a point where the economics are very much stressing this fishery. The resource is declining, and without our understanding of the economic implications of some of these changes.

I think that we're asking and why I feel like we had such a pushback from industry is, we're asking them to make major changes without a good understanding of what those applications will be to their bottom line. That is a tough place for us to all be in at this point. We've seen it in other fisheries; we've seen it in other lobster fisheries. But that is just the reality we're in right now.

CHAIR ZOBEL: David.

MR. BORDEN: Just an added take off one of Carl's points, and I'm not disagreeing with that. I mean we really need the economic information on the impacts on the fishery, in terms of changing the size structure. I mean at least down our way we still have some dealers, particularly in New Beford that grade and pay based on size.

You talk about shifting the catch from Chickens, which they don't pay much for, up into Halves and two-pound lobsters. If the price goes up like two dollars a pound, then it's going to buffer some of the negative impacts. We're going to need that type of guidance if we're going to consider this. I would also like to add to that that I think the question that Steve Train asked about what are the other mechanisms that we could utilize to manage the resource here, where we basically get equivalent benefits. I would love the technical people to talk about that some time on an agenda, to see what they could come up with for another strategy. I think that would feed into the process also.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Any other comments from the Board? With that, thank you, Tracy.

## CHANGE IN LOBSTER CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT AREA 5 SEASON CLOSURE DATES

CHAIR ZOBEL: We can move on to the LMA5.

DR. PUGH: The second task that the Board asked us to look into was to review a proposal from LMA5 about shifting the timing of their seasonal closure. As a reminder, their current closure essentially is no lobster retention from February 1st through March 31st. There is a two-week grace period from February 1 through 14 to finish getting all the traps out of the water. Then there is a one-week period on March 4 through March 31 to set the traps.

Those traps can't be rehauled until April 1, but they can start getting the gear in the water. The proposal is essentially to shift their window so there is no lobster retention is from January 16 through March 15, and this proposal is all focused around the increasing access to black sea bass. With that shift then the proposal would like to allow traps to be set and rehauled starting on March 9, and this is a set and rehaul, unlike the current.

This is 15 days early, and again this is to target black sea bass. This effectively shifts the timing of that lobster closure window earlier by two weeks. The TC, we don't have any landing or relevant time period in order to do analysis here. There is a little bit of landings data from January, but not really in March, in terms of what would come in March had we made this shift.

We had to focus on sort of a qualitative evaluation in discussion here. What we talked about is primarily a concern that shifting the timing could increase exploitation a little bit. The thought here is that catchability in March is likely higher than it would be in January, due to warming waters and increased activity of lobsters.

We recognize that this change in exploitation would likely be very small, but it is there nonetheless. Essentially what we came to suggest to the Board was that because this proposal is based on increasing access to black sea bass, we suggest that maybe the Board would monitor by the timing of the setting here to accommodate this request for black sea bass access.

Allow setting starting March 9, allow those traps to be rehauled for black sea bass harvest, but the lobsters have to be discarded. Maintain the current prohibition on lobster possession from February 1 through March 31, and we think that any bycatch in hauling for black sea bass, we're not really afraid that this is going to cause any discard related mortality to lobsters in this time of year. You know the animals should be all hard shelled, they are not molting during this time window. Trap discard for lobsters is assumed to be negligible or zero.

We don't think that this would have a big impact to lobster exploitation, but would allow the access for black sea bass as is driving this request. Yes, again, this may change the actions requested, but it also maintains the intended purpose of the seasonal closure to reduce lobster exploitation, which is coming from Addendum XVII. That is where we're at with this one, so anyone have any questions?

CHAIR ZOBEL: Thank you, Tracy, questions for Tracy. David Borden.

MR. BORDEN: I'm not sure this is a question for Tracy, but I'll try. Is there any reason they can't, these individuals can't set black sea bass pots in this area? In other words, they want to get access to said lobster pots so that they can catch these black sea bass, is the way I understand the situation. But they are not prohibited from setting black sea bass pots, as long as they don't possess lobsters, is that correct, Caitlin?

MS. CAITLIN STARKS: There is a period where the pots, that are also tagged for lobster, cannot be set during that closure period.

MS. ZOBEL: Go ahead, John Clark.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Thanks to the TC for analyzing this. Do you need a motion for us to move ahead with this?

CHAIR ZOBEL: It depends what the Board wants to do. If you want to move forward with some sort of management action then yes, I do believe you would need a motion. Caitlin.

MS. STARKS: I guess just to provide some context or options. The LMA5 Plan was approved as a conservation equivalency plan by the Board from Addendum XVII. If you wanted to make a change to the rules for LMA5 you could do it without an addendum.

That process would probably be you would want to task or maybe have the LCMT for Area 5 meet and provide a proposal to be evaluated as a conservation equivalency, which with the TC suggestion we could kind of do a conservation equivalency there, because there isn't an expected change in mortality from the discards. But it would have to be evaluated by the TC, approved by the Board and brought back at a future meeting as an official conservation equivalency.

Then the other option is to initiate a management action if you wanted to expand it outside of that. That said, any of these things would have to then go through a federal rulemaking process with NOAA. You could make a change to our state waters rules, but it would also have to be made in the federal regulations.

MR. CLARK: Well then with the fastest method, I mean they sound pretty lengthy if we went through all that. If the Board did decide to push forward with this, because I know in Delaware I spoke to our fishery, or at least half of it. Mike, you probably did the same in Maryland. The fishery is onboard with this, so is there a way we could move to start this process going now, rather than going through the Team Meeting?

CHAIR ZOBEL: Toni, go ahead.

MS. KERNS: John, we strongly advise you to have an LCMT meeting before you bring us a conservation equivalency plan, because we would want to make sure that all of the states have spoken to their industry. If indeed the process is that you just want to not be able to possess lobster during this time, as the conservation equivalency then that is fine.

We would still need, and the reason why we're saying have your LCMT meetings, is because there are guidelines in terms of when we do conservation equivalency it is like who needs to meet, when they need to meet, when those conservation equivalencies need to be put forward so the Board can consider them.

One of them is the Advisory Panel, but in this case, I would suggest it just be the LCMT since it is this very one specific issue for Area 5, and then we would move forward in that way. But again, this process will take a longer period of time, because it has to go to federal rulemaking.

MR. CLARK: How do we then start this process? Who convenes LCMT for 5 to meet?

MS. KERNS: The states do.

MR. CLARK: Okay, so we could set up a meeting anytime.

MS. KERNS: Correct, and just be cognizant of, and I can send you or Rich, whoever, and Joe the Conservation Equivalency Guidelines, which has all the timings that you need to meet in order to get the issue before the Board at the August meeting.

MS. ZOBEL: Sounds like the action there is for those states to get together, have a discussion and convene the LCMT for Lobster Management Area 5.

MS. KERNS: Correct, and remember it is the states that hold the list of the LCMTs, the Commission does not hold that list, so you all decide who sits on the LCMTs not the Commission.

MS. ZOBEL: Mike Luisi.

MR. MICHAEL LUISI: Since we're at the Lobster Board talking about black sea bass, I wonder how does this get communicated to the Black Sea Bass Board, Black Sea Bass, Scup, Summer Flounder Board, and does that Board need to be involved in any way, shape or form?

MS. KERNS: I don't believe so, Mike, because it's the subject of the permit, which is through NOAA, the Area 5 waiver permit, which makes these traps lobster traps.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Eric Reid.

MR. ERIC REID: Since we are talking about black sea bass and now fluke and everything else on the Lobster Board. My only concern, and I don't have an answer is, if those pots are there two weeks earlier, what does that do with gear conflict in the trawl fishery, which may be in that area at the same time? If you're going to think about opening the area a little earlier, you're going to have to consider that.

CHAIR ZOBEL: I know we run into that plenty of times in other fisheries, where there is a change made and somebody has established a fishery during that season. Very good point. Any other questions? Doug Grout.

MR. DOUGLAS E. GROUT: Not so much a question, but I just hope when the states pull together their LCMT 5 that they bring forward both the original proposal and then what the suggested easier fix that the TC put forward, so they can look at both and see which would be easiest to implement.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Noted, thanks. Any other questions? Toni, go ahead.

MS. KERNS: It's not a question, but I don't know how important it is for these individuals to retain lobster or not, but I believe we can drop that permit in selection for a year, and they could just fish for their sea bass. But if they want to continue to retain lobster then they wouldn't want to drop that permit. But if I'm speaking out of turn, Alli, please.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Alli Murphy, go ahead.

MS. ALLISON MURPHY: Yes, the lobster permit is limited access, so you do have to renew it or you're going to lose that eligibility. You know someone, I think there are ways and that industry could not renew it until later in the year, potentially. I think there is a 45-day window to make changes to your federal permit. I think there is some flexibility there. But I think if folks pursue that they should be aware that if you don't renew your federal permit for a year, you would lose that.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Any other questions or comments? Since I did it with the last one, I will go out and see if there are any public questions or comments on this. Seeing none in the room and none online. Thank you, Tracy, very much, echoing everybody's comments about the good work that the TC has done.

We tasked you with many, many things over the last few years, and the TC has always answered far an above what we've requested, so thank you.

## CONSIDER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION STEERING COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

CHAIR ZOBEL: The next item on our agenda is to Consider Management Strategy Evaluation Steering Committee nominations. Go to Caitlin Starks for this.

MS. STARKS: I just want to remind everyone why we're discussing this today. But this stemmed from when the Board reviewed the 2025 benchmark stock assessment last fall, and the stock status for the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank stock is not depleted, but the assessment did indicate that abundance had declined by 34% from that time series high that was seen in the 2020 assessment.

At that meeting the Board tasked the Technical Committee with updating its previous guidance on the process for initiating a management strategy evaluation or MSE for the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank stock, which the Board reviewed at the last meeting this winter. As first steps toward the development of a Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Lobster MSE, the Technical Committee provided two recommendations. The first one was to form a Steering Committee for scoping and coordinating the development of an MSE process, which would include the process to illicit management objectives from a variety of stakeholders as a first step.

The recommended representation on such a Steering Committee would include Board members, TC members, Commission staff, members of the Commission Committee on Economics and Social Sciences or CESS, industry, stakeholders, preferably with experience participating in the fisheries management process, and members of the

Commission's Assessment and Science Committee or Management and Science Committee with past experience in MSE.

The Technical Committee also noted that the number of people on the Steering Committee that they recommended was about a dozen members to keep the group effective, and that it could be populated through a call for nominations and approved via Board action. The second piece of the Technical Committee recommendation is to begin a formal process to develop management goals and objectives for the future of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank lobster fisheries.

The TC recommended that the Steering Committee would be responsible for designing and developing this process, and that it would likely include a series of meetings, both at local scales, like state management zones or LCMAs and at a regional stock wide scale. The Steering Committee would provide guidance on the spatial scale and the number and content of the stakeholder meetings.

The Technical Committee also emphasized that while this type of management objective process is a necessary precursor to starting an MSE process, it wouldn't commit the Board to pursuing an MSE. The outcomes of this type of process could be beneficial no matter what direction the Board goes ultimately with MSE for lobster.

Taking all of that into consideration, the Board did agree to form a Steering Committee and these are the individuals that have been nominated to serve on this Steering Committee, and I'll just read them out so they are on the record. From the Board we have Carl Wilson, Renee Zobel, Jason McNamee and Bob Glenn.

Then from the TC, Kathleen Reardon, Tracy Pugh, and Burton Shank, Todd Guilfoos from the CESS, industry stakeholders are John Drouin, Richard Howland, John Jordan Jr., Michael Flannigan, Beth Casoni, Brendan Adams, and Hank Soule, and then from ASMFC staff, Jeff Kipp and myself.

A couple of notes on the proposed membership. First, there are more than 12 nominees here, so just noting that. However, the states as they were providing recommendations for Steering Committee members agreed that it would be important to have industry representation from the beginning of this whole process, and noted the need to include representation from these different geographic areas that are represented here.

Then second, this Steering Committee would specifically be focused on developing a plan or a process for identifying the management objectives via industry meetings. If the Board were to pursue this process of meetings and holding get-togethers with industry, and then later move forward with a full MSE process, at that point it may be beneficial to reevaluate and possibly change the membership of the Steering Committee for that different purpose. Then this is a proposed, albeit probably over ambitious timeline for the work of the Steering Committee, assuming the Board approves the nominations today.

Staff thinks three meetings would be needed at a minimum and that they could be done virtually. The first of these meetings could occur maybe mid-June to review the existing management objectives, identify gaps given the current social and economic conditions facing the fishery, and discuss how to incorporate the existing management objectives into a new process.

Then a second meeting could occur to discuss the management objectives process, including a review of other examples that have been done, identifying the universe of stakeholders that would need to be involved, and outlining the structure, schedule and participants and objectives of each of the stakeholder meetings, and determining the role of a facilitator.

Then in the later meeting, possibly September, the Steering Committee could meet to discuss the cost estimates, given the other details that have been

put together and recommended and develop the final report back to the Board. This proposed timeline would get that report out to the Board on the recommended management objectives process at the annual meeting.
But that said, I will be up front, that it will likely be difficult to schedule meetings with this number of people, especially during the fishing season. This might be a challenging timeline and it might not be best to impose it as a strict timeline. That said, these are the actions for the Board to consider on this item, which are to approve the Steering Committee nominations and to provide guidance on that proposed timeline and objectives for that Steering Committee.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Does anyone have any questions for Caitlin before I entertain a motion. Carl, go ahead.

MR. WILSON: Just a question on the nature of the Subcommittee meetings, are they public? Can people listen in?

CHAIR ZOBEL: Yes, I think unless the Board were to specify that they wouldn't be public they would be public. That is our general policy. Jason McNamee.

DR. McNAMEE: Everything looks good. One question I had there, and I'm probably not understanding the way that you are kind of structuring the committee meetings. But I guess it is the June meeting in particular. I'm just wondering what you thought about sort of combining that into like the July meeting, for instance.

The reason is, I can see, so just kind of a review of existing objectives can potentially flow nicely into the subsequent process of adding to or modifying of something like that. Maybe I'm missing something else that is happening in the June meeting, but just wondering if we could combine those two.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Jeff Kipp.

MR. KIPP: Jay, I can take a shot at answering your question. I think the thought process there was, in addition to reviewing what is already on the books, what management objectives, identifying what the holes are. We also wanted to include some case studies of where this has been done for other species, to give this group some idea on path forward.

Then I think the thought process too was, when that group identifies what those gaps are, it would be good to have some time between that call and the next call to kind of brainstorm and think about those gaps, and bring those to the next call, we could more collectively over existing management objectives and more modern in future management objectives, sort of having a better idea of what those gaps are.

DR. McNAMEE: That makes perfect sense, thank you.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Eric Reid.

MR. REID: It's just a simple question, I think, which means it's probably complicated, right? You have one economist social scientist in the makeup of that committee, is that enough?

CHAIR ZOBEL: Jeff.

MR. KIPP: Yes, we think that is appropriate for the scope work for this group, which is essentially to identify what the landscape of these workshops looks like. When are they going to occur, what is the spatial scale, et cetera. We recognize that there is going to be a much broader universe of people that are going to have to be actually involved in those workshops.

That is one of the tasks of this Steering Committee, is to identify who all those folks are that need to be incorporated and included in these workshops that occur. We would plan to address a lot more economic experience and background at that point.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Any other questions? I would love to entertain a motion to kick us off here, if anybody has a motion to bring forward. Carl Wilson.

MR. WILSON: I **move to approve the nomination to the Steering Committee on Lobster MSE.**

CHAIR ZOBEL: Seconded by Jason McNamee, any rationale for either of you? It's pretty straightforward.

MR. WILSON: No direct rationale, other than I do appreciate the expanded membership to reflect some of the spatial variation within the fishery.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Okay, so any discussion on the motion from the Board? No discussion from the Board. I do see a member of the public with their hand up, so I am going to go ahead and take comment/question. Hank Soule.

MR. HANK SOULE: Thanks, Hank Soule; Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association. Just a process question. If one of the nominees is unable to serve what happens then?

CHAIR ZOBEL: Bob, go ahead.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: The nominees came through the state, so I think if there is somebody that can't serve, the state has the ability to nominate a new individual and the Board can approve it.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Yes, and Hank, if you're looking for a meeting-by-meeting type situation. This is a very small workgroup, so we're really looking for a commitment from whoever is going to serve. It wouldn't make sense to switch people out in the middle of a 3-meeting process. All right, **is there any objection to the motion on the board? Seeing no objection the motion carries by consent.** Next up is a report from the Gulf of Maine states on industry surveys and meetings. Let's go north to south this time, so Carl Wilson, you are up first.

MR. WILSON: Well, we once again have had another round or are in the middle of another round of Lobster Zone Council meetings, where the topic of the day continues to be around how the fishery is performing and what the status of the resource is. Within our Lobster Advisory Council, we also had a subcommittee formed, or a portion of the Lobster Advisory Council started to work up a series of initiatives that would be commonsense or relatively kind of easy wins, is how they were described.

Our technical staff within the department is going back and trying to provide some evaluation of what those might be. As an example, we're trying to use similar to what the TC report today was, where we're using potential gauge size increases as kind of a reference point for what these smaller measures might be, a small part of what that increase would have been.

We're looking at kind of shifting the harvest window, with kind of a shift in that size window. We're also looking at what a spun-up lobster hatchery supplementation program would be, and what the contributions of purchasing lobsters, v-notching them and release would be as well. These are programs that we've done in the past, but at relatively small scale.

Then we're also looking at the size, location and number of vents, and also the size and location of bio panels that allow lobsters to escape if the trap is lost. Like I said, we have another Lobster Management Council mid-May, and we hope to be presenting some technical analysis on those small measures. Conversation continues in Maine.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Thanks, Carl, I'll be extremely brief. Right after the February meeting we had the opportunity to present back to our industry association the results of our lobster industry survey, which were all presented to the Board, very similar amongst the three states, and so we continue to have dialogue. Go ahead to Bob Glenn.

MR. ROBERT GLENN: Thank you, Madame Chair, I'll be even briefer. I have nothing new to report at this time to the Board.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Okay, does anyone have any burning questions for the three of us on our updates? Seeing no questions.

CHAIR ZOBEL: We are moving on to an Update on a Request for Information or RFI for Alternative Gear Marking Framework, Alli Murphy.

**UPDATE ON REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR ALTERNATIVE GEAR MARKING FRAMEWORK**

MS. MURPHY: I also just have a brief update for you all. The request for information notice, last time I think I reported that we were drafting it, is now in review. Again, like I said at the last meeting, I'm hoping that at your summer meeting we'll have a more detailed update to give to you all.

**CONSIDER OUTSTANDING MANAGEMENT CHANGES**

CHAIR ZOBEL: We will now consider Outstanding Management Changes. Caitlin, go ahead.

MS. STARKS: I'll try to remind everyone what this is about, since it is kind of a confusing title. But at the last meeting there was a request for staff to provide the Board with a summary of any management changes that had been recommended in previous discussions as a Board, or with the Lobster Conservation Management Team, so that the Board could be aware of those and consider them for a future management action.

I went through the meeting minutes and LCMT summaries from the past several years and pulled together a list of those. For LCMA 2 and 3, these recommendations came from the LCMT meetings that were held a few years ago to provide input on the NOAA Fisheries rulemaking on Area 2 and 3 Ownership path and trap cap reductions, which was responding to the Commission Lobster Addenda XXI and XXII. That rulemaking has since been withdrawn so, in federal waters the caps were not implemented.

The recommended measures for Area 2 were to allow harvesters to maintain a maximum of 2 permits with 800 traps each for a total of 1600 traps, rather than an ownership cap of 800 traps, and this would allow the possibility of banking up to 800 traps in addition to the cap of 800 active traps. There was also a suggestion at the LCMT 2 meeting to allow the transfer of traps between permits owned by a single entity, without the 10% conservation tax.

Then for Area 3 the LCMT recommended not raising the active trap cap as described in Addendum XXI, and that would mean maintaining an active trap cap of 2,000 traps. They also recommended not reducing the ownership cap as described in Addendum XXII, and the maximum ownership cap is 5 times the individual permit cap. Then lastly of course there is the management change for Area 5 that was discussed earlier today to change the lobster fishery closure dates. But that is the list of items that I was able to pull.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Thanks for the report back to us on that. Any questions for Caitlin on that? Dave Borden.

MR. BORDEN: I would just like to thank Caitlin and Toni for doing that. I was the one that asked the question at the last Board meeting, and Caitlin and I have already had this exchange. There are a number of other ideas that have been circulating both within Area 3 and Area 2, and I'm sure that other areas will come forward in the future with other suggestions. I just look at this as a living document. I don't think we need to do anything. You can stick it on the shelf, and as additional ideas come forward from the industry, I think we should add to it, so that at some point we can do a comprehensive addendum, so thank you very much.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Any other Board members? Okay, seeing none.

**REVIEW AND POPULATE ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERSHIP**

CHAIR ZOBEL: We are going to go to Tina to review and populate the Advisory Panel membership.

MS. TINA L. BERGER: For the Board's consideration I offer the appointment of Christopher Townsend, a professional pot fisherman from Massachusetts. He replaces Eric Lorentzen, who was previously on the panel.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Do we have a motion to do so? Bob Glenn.

MR. GLENN**:** I **move to approve the nomination of Chris Townsend from Massachusetts to the Lobster Advisory Panel to replace Eric Lorentzen**.

CHAIR ZOBEL: Do we have a second? Seconded by Joe Cimino. Anything else to add? Good, okay. Any discussion on the motion. **Is there any objection to the motion on the board? Seeing no objection the motion carries by consent**. All right, one final item. Do we have any other business to come before the Board today? Dennis Abbott.

MR. DENNIS ABBOTT: We had a lot of discussion about moving forward with lobster management and maybe increasing gauge sizes et cetera, and during the last iteration of this there was considerable discussion about the Canadian involvement. Are we going to ignore that as we move along, are we going to inform them at a much later date that we've done something or are doing something, or should there be some sort of parallel path working with the Canadians?

In my own mind I can see with the relationships between the two countries, that I don't know how they will be amenable to anything we do. It seems like that should be part of our considerations, because it was in the past. I didn't know where to bring that up earlier, but that has been on my mind.

CHAIR ZOBEL: We'll just say we're not taking off any actions right now, we have these work groups that are kind of the precursor to a potential Management Strategy Evaluation. The economic piece, a number of people have already, and I agree is an important component for analysis, as well as kind of these market components, including the relationship of Canada.

I perceive before anything would move forward that we need to move forward with a number of those things, but we don't have anything before us right now that drives that direct conversation. But Toni, you had your hand up. Was there anything you wanted to add? No, okay. That is my understanding and kind of how I see it. If anyone disagrees with me, kind of raise your hand on that.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Thank you for bringing it up, Dennis. Any other business to come before the Board? We are adjourned, thank you.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2026)