Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop



A Workshop of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

September 23-24, 2026
Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel
Linthicum Heights, Maryland

MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 23–24, 2026, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) convened the Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop in Linthicum Heights, Maryland. The workshop brought together 22 stakeholders representing charter and headboat operators, private recreational anglers, supporting businesses, and advocates from along the U.S. east coast. The workshop sought to gather stakeholder input to inform continued development of the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment (Amendment), which is considering approaches for managing the for-hire and private recreational fishing modes separately for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish, along with related permitting and reporting requirements.

Through facilitated plenary discussions and breakout sessions, participants reviewed draft Amendment alternatives, identified potential refinements and additional approaches, and discussed implementation challenges and data/analysis needs. Discussions highlighted substantial interest in changes to recreational management approaches that better account for the differing needs of fishing modes and support viable for-hire fisheries. However, participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining opportunities for private anglers, avoiding unintended barriers to for-hire participation, and accounting for differences among species, regions, and fishing operations.

Key Findings

Table ES-1 summarizes the principal findings and areas of agreement emerging from workshop discussions. Characterizations of agreement reflect the facilitator's qualitative assessment of expressed perspectives rather than formal votes or consensus positions. Not all participants expressed views on every topic, and agreement on general management principles did not necessarily extend to specific alternatives or implementation details.

Table ES-1. Summary of key findings and areas of agreement at the Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop.

Topic/Alternative	Key Findings and Areas of Agreement
Overarching Comments	Participants across roles recognized the need for action to provide relief to the struggling for-hire fleet. Broad support for removing bluefish from further consideration in the Amendment, with one opposing view.
Mode Management: Overall	Broad interest among for-hire participants in separate management measures for the for-hire and private modes. Participants emphasized the importance of accounting for species- and region-specific differences, while concerns were raised regarding impacts on private anglers, accountability, and transparency in development of measures. Substantial interest in exploring shore-based measures, particularly lower size limits, but differing views on whether these should be developed through the Amendment or by individual states.
For-Hire Resiliency (Alt. 1C)	Participants generally viewed the potential risks of a four-year management cycle as outweighing the benefits of increased stability and predictability. The underlying measures were considered by for-hire operators to be more important than their duration, and any longer cycle would require clearly defined triggers for reverting to a two-year cycle.
Specialized For-Hire Approaches (Alts. 1E and 2B-3)	Greater interest emerged in tiered permitting (Alt. 2B-3) than in the proposed Letter of Authorization (LOA) program (Alt. 1E). Participants generally favored eligibility and reporting requirements that distinguish more active for-hire operators while maintaining pathways for legitimate new entrants. Some suggested testing specialized measures through a pilot or temporary approach.
Federal Permitting (Alts. 2B-1 and 2B-2)	Broad opposition to federal for-hire permit moratoria and limited-entry programs, primarily due to concerns about barriers to new entrants and future industry growth. However, participants generally expressed support for other enhanced permit requirements to validate the fleet, as well as interest in approaches that establish qualifications for specialized measures (i.e., tiered permitting) while maintaining opportunities for new entrants and legitimate fleet growth.
Federal Reporting (Alt. 2C)	Broad support for requiring a minimum level of participation in the NOAA Fisheries For-Hire Survey (e.g., 75-100% compliance) and reinstating a "Did Not Fish" for-hire reporting requirement.
State Permitting and Reporting (Alts. 3B and 3C)	General opposition to state-level limited-entry programs (Alt. 3B), alongside substantial interest in strengthening for-hire permit qualifications and improving state-level reporting (Alt. 3C). Participants encouraged further Commission-state coordination, recognizing differences in existing requirements and implementation feasibility.

Considerations for Further Amendment Development

Across the workshop's sessions, several broad considerations and needs emerged as particularly important for continued Amendment development, including:

- **Evaluate the implications of Amendment alternatives on different modes**—in particular, how more liberal for-hire mode measures could impact private angler measures. The Recreation Demand Model could be helpful, though its limitations should be recognized.
- **Better characterize for-hire permit activity and potential eligibility requirements** to qualify for specialized measures, such as activity thresholds, consideration of vessel history and state-only permit holders, and maintaining opportunities for new for-hire entrants.
- **Consider state-federal implementation challenges**—specifically, additional work is needed to determine how specialized for-hire approaches would interact with state regulations, conservation equivalency, and enforcement. Federal coordination with states, as well as coordination among states, is needed.
- **Consider phased/pilot approaches** to test performance of novel strategies such as the tiered permitting approach before implementing a more permanent system; some for-hire operators, however, emphasized the urgency of decisive action sooner to provide needed relief.
- **Maintain stakeholder engagement in the development of measures related to the Amendment,** as there were concerns about the transparency of mode-based measures development in previous instances.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The workshop identified substantial common ground among participants on several management principles, including the importance of supporting viable for-hire fisheries, improving reporting and accountability, and avoiding unnecessary barriers to entry. At the same time, participants expressed differing perspectives on the design and implementation of specific management approaches, including how their benefits and costs would be distributed among modes and strategies for mitigating risk.

The findings summarized in this report are intended to inform continued refinement and evaluation of draft Amendment alternatives by the Council, Commission, and Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team (FMAT/PDT). They do not represent formal consensus positions or recommendations adopted through a workshop vote. The report provides additional detail on participant perspectives, suggested refinements, unresolved questions, and analytical needs associated with each alternative set.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WORKSHOP BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, the Council and Commission have jointly engaged in the development of the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment[1] (Amendment) to explore whether the for-hire (charter/headboat) and private recreational fishing modes for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish should be managed separately. This effort arose in response to broad recognition of the differing motivations, needs, and economic considerations of the for-hire and private recreational fishing modes, respectively. As a result, a single set of management measures may not always meet the needs of both sectors. In addition, the Amendment is exploring options related to for-hire permitting and reporting requirements.[2]

Table 1. An overview of the alternatives included in the draft Recreational Sector Separation Amendment discussed at the workshop.

1. Recreational Mode Management Guidelines ➢ ***Approaches to setting different measures for different recreational modes***
2. Federal For-Hire Permitting Requirements ➢ ***Limitations on, or additional requirements for, federal for-hire permits***
3. State-Level Permitting and Reporting Requirements ➢ ***Requirements for states to implement certain minimum permitting and/or reporting requirements***

The Amendment was initiated in 2020 but was put on hold due to other priorities before work resumed in 2024, with scoping and development of draft Amendment alternatives occurring over the course of 2025. During the December 2025 joint meeting of the Council and the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Policy Board (Policy Board), the groups recognized that further stakeholder input was needed to inform continued refinement of alternatives.

[1] For more information on the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment, please visit the Council's and/or Commission's dedicated Amendment landing pages:
Council - https://www.mafmc.org/actions/recreational-sector-separation-amendment.
Commission - https://asmfc.org/actions/recreational-sector-separation-and-data-collection-amendment/.

[2] Information on the Amendment's draft alternatives can be found here:
http://www.mafmc.org/s/SectorSep_AltsSummary_Oct2026.pdf.

To move the Amendment discussion forward, the Council and Commission hosted the Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop on September 23-24, 2026, at the Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel in Linthicum Heights, Maryland. Workshop feedback, summarized below, will help the Council and Policy Board further develop options under consideration for this action.

1.2 Workshop Goal, Objectives and Intended Outcomes

The broad goal of the workshop was to bring together diverse perspectives from across the recreational fishing community to explore management approaches that account for the unique needs and priorities of different recreational fishing modes and inform continued development of the Amendment.

Workshop objectives and intended outcomes were defined to help ensure achievement of this overarching goal and position the workshop to better inform further Amendment development.

Objectives

1. Achieve an understanding of the current concerns and challenges encountered by each component of the recreational fishery
2. Gather feedback and recommendations on existing draft alternatives, including identifying priority actions and areas of consensus
3. Recommend any additional options/analyses that should be considered within the existing scope of the action

Intended Outcomes

1. A list of recommendations for the Council and Commission, including:
    a. Priority alternatives/management approaches and other areas of consensus
    b. Key considerations for further development of alternatives
    c. New ideas for alternatives not previously considered
    d. Recommendations for any analyses to support existing/newly identified draft alternatives

1.3 Workshop Approach

A five-member workshop planning team consisting of relevant staff from the Council, Commission, and NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) met regularly with the workshop facilitator in the months preceding the workshop to coordinate participant selection, development of the workshop agenda and other meeting materials,

and workshop logistics. Additional meetings with the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team (FMAT/PDT) were held as needed to provide feedback on workshop planning.

To ensure that workshop participants reflected a broad cross-section of the recreational community that targets the affected species, participants were selected via an application-based process. A total of 22 recreational fishery stakeholders participated, who represented a range of roles in the recreational community and locations along the U.S. east coast (Figure 1; Appendix I).

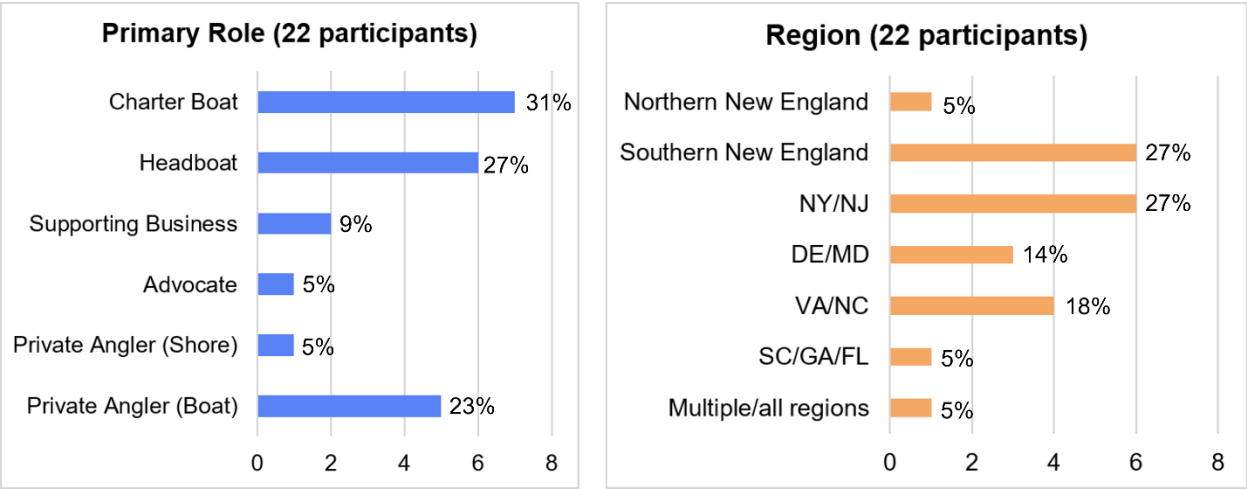


Figure 1. Workshop participants by primary role (left) and region (right). "NNE" refers to Northern New England (ME, NH, and MA north of Cape Cod); "SNE" refers to Southern New England (MA from Cape Cod south, RI, and CT).

To inform development of the workshop agenda, a short questionnaire was distributed to participants approximately one month prior to the workshop. The questionnaire asked about participants' Amendment engagement to date, familiarity with the coastwide measures setting process, initial viewpoints on draft Amendment alternatives, and priority species.

Several background materials were developed and distributed prior to the workshop to bolster participants' familiarity with the Amendment and draft alternatives and align workshop expectations. These materials were posted on the workshop landing page. [3]

[3] Links to background materials can be found on the Council's Recreational Sector Separation Workshop webpage: https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/rec-sector-separation-workshop.

Workshop Format

The workshop agenda (see Appendix II) included a mix of facilitated plenary sessions and breakout discussions (each with a facilitator and note-taker from the planning team), along with introductory presentations by Council and Commission staff on the Amendment overall and its draft alternatives. Each session included a series of prompting questions to catalyze discussion among participants. To facilitate constructive dialogue, the workshop agenda did not align exactly with the draft Amendment structure but rather grouped draft alternative sets thematically into four sessions:

- Session 1: Mode Management (Alternatives 1A, 1B, 1D, and 1F)
- Session 2: For-Hire Resiliency (Alternative 1C)
- Session 3: Specialized For-Hire Approaches (Alternatives 1E and 2B-3)
- Session 4: Federal For-Hire Permitting and State Permitting and Reporting (Alternatives 2A, 2B-1, 2B-2, 2C, and 3A-3C)

In addition, workshop participants were provided with an opportunity to suggest new alternative ideas that fell within the Amendment's scope as well as to discuss key priorities for further development—or conversely, alternatives that should not warrant further consideration.

How This Report Is Structured

This report provides a brief introduction to each workshop session, followed by a summary of key discussion points and an associated synthesis table. Discussion points are not necessarily limited to the session in which they are presented, as related topics sometimes arose during multiple sessions.

The levels of agreement presented in the synthesis tables reflect the facilitator's qualitative assessment of perspectives expressed during workshop discussions, rather than formal votes or consensus determinations. "Broad agreement" indicates a widely shared perspective with little substantive opposition expressed, while "general agreement" indicates a predominant perspective accompanied by some differing views or qualifications. "Minority view" identifies a perspective expressed by a smaller subset of participants. Not all participants expressed views on every topic. Accordingly, the report identifies general areas of common ground, differing perspectives, concerns, and suggested refinements rather than formal consensus positions.

This report is intended to serve as a reference for the FMAT/PDT, the Council, and the Commission's Policy Board. Additional information about the Amendment and draft alternatives is available in the workshop background materials.

2.0 Opening Remarks

The workshop opened with introductory remarks by Dan McKiernan, Director of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and Chair of the Commission, and Joe Cimino, Director of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Marine Resources Administration and Chair of the Council. Chair McKiernan emphasized the importance of sustaining viable recreational fisheries and for-hire businesses for the Amendment's four species while recognizing the challenges associated with managing diverse recreational fisheries across states and regions. He noted the tradeoff between standardization of management measures and flexibility, as well as the need to consider unintended consequences. Chair Cimino encouraged participants to focus on practical solutions and lessons learned from previous management experiences, including the importance of carefully considering how mode-based recreational management approaches are designed and implemented. Both McKiernan and Cimino noted that the path taken through the Amendment may inform approaches for other species and recreational fisheries in other jurisdictions. They also stressed the value of the workshop as an opportunity for stakeholders with different perspectives to engage constructively and provide critical input on the draft Amendment.

3.0 Mode Management

Staff provided an overview of the Amendment's draft alternatives related to mode management—the development of different management measures for different components of the recreational fishery. Mode management is currently used in some capacity for each of the Amendment's four species,[4] but application of such a management tool has been inconsistent at both the state and federal levels. The draft Amendment includes alternatives related to developing uniform mode management guidelines (Alternative 1B), establishing two or three standardized regions along the coast for which to apply for-hire measures (Alternative 1D), and a one-time "reset" of measures for the for-hire fishery (Alternative 1F). In addition to feedback on these specific alternatives, workshop participants were asked to share views on which modes most

[4] An overview of how mode management is currently applied for the four species can be found here: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/511cdc7fe4b00307a2628ac6/t/6aa2de2e61041b6fb8fe13d4/1789058606311/Guide+to+Current+Uses+of+Mode+Management.pdf.

warranted separate measures, which mode-based measures (e.g., size limits, bag limits, seasons) were most needed, and potential risks or unintended consequences that could arise with the application of mode management.

Some of the key discussion topics emerging from this session are summarized below and in Table 2. The discussion points summarized apply broadly to the draft alternatives included within the Mode Management alternative set (Alternative Set 1); discussions specific to the For-Hire Resiliency (1C) and Letter of Authorization (1E) alternatives are described in Sections 4.0 and 5.0, respectively.

Priority Modes and Measures

Participating members of the for-hire community generally agreed that **mode-based measures between the for-hire and private components of the recreational fishery were most urgently needed**. They cited years of increasingly restrictive measures, which have reduced angler satisfaction and led to challenges in booking trips as well as a reduction in the size of the for-hire fleet. Many participants mentioned that for-hire vessels provided a unique experience/opportunity to target these species that would not otherwise exist and also cited the for-hire fleet's additional reporting requirements for federally permitted vessels (and in some cases for state-permitted vessels). At the same time, several participants voiced that there should be guidance to avoid overly disparate differences in measures between the private and for-hire modes.

Some participants, including private anglers, also recognized that mode management between charter boats and headboats may be desired as well. They acknowledged that headboats may afford the only opportunity for anglers of limited means to fish on a boat and as a result may warrant more liberal measures. However, it was also noted by both charter boat and headboat operators that a key barrier to such mode management is establishing a uniform definition of a charter boat versus a headboat (e.g., discerning them as inspected versus uninspected vessels); this inconsistency could undermine enforcement efforts. **Generally, participants viewed the establishment of specific measures for charter and headboat modes as a second-order concern.**

Participants from multiple backgrounds expressed **interest in mode management for shore-based anglers**, recognizing that anglers targeting the draft Amendment's four species from shore are generally at a disadvantage regarding the numbers and/or size of fish that are available to them. There was also recognition that young anglers, subsistence fishermen, and anglers without access to a boat are often restricted to fishing from shore, and without specialized measures they might not have the opportunity to harvest fish.

Moreover, shore-based angling is often a "gateway" for anglers to eventually participate in other modes such as purchasing their own boat or sailing on charter/headboat vessels; as a result, preserving these opportunities is important. There was substantial interest in further pursuing shore-based mode management, although given that shore fishing is inherently a state waters activity and flexibility for states to develop shore-based measures already exists, views differed on whether this should occur through individual state action or within the scope of the Amendment. One private angler opposed the idea of introducing a schism within the private angler community through separate shore-mode management, and expressed that if it were to be considered at all, it should occur on a state-by-state basis.

While some participants noted reducing size limits as a priority for for-hire and shore-based modes, there was also broad recognition that the specific **measures most urgently needed were highly dependent on species and region.**

Priority Species

There was interest in developing mode-based management for scup, black sea bass, and summer flounder, with black sea bass and summer flounder measures viewed as key priorities by many attendees. **Bluefish was widely regarded as the lowest priority species for further pursuing mode management, with numerous participants recommending that it be removed from the Amendment altogether.** Participants across regions noted that bluefish measures are mostly uniform along the coast and tend to be fairly stable (unlike for the other three species), with mode-specific measures already applied in most states and in federal waters. Participants also highlighted that continued inclusion of bluefish in this action could slow progress on implementing mode-based measures for the other species. However, one participant questioned why bluefish should be removed if it already is subject to mode management and this effort is attempting to standardize mode management approaches across species.

Specific Measures of Most Interest and Regional Considerations

Workshop participants generally supported the concept of region-specific measures (Alternative 1D), recognizing the need to balance implementation feasibility with the unique characteristics of fisheries along the species' range and necessary flexibilities to accommodate those differences. At the same time, there was general concern about overly restricting regulations via less flexible regional approaches (e.g., through the establishment of only two regions). There was also recognition that the current regions established for summer flounder and black sea bass may not be suitable, but also that it is

inherently difficult to develop appropriate regions for these species**.** In some cases, the most appropriate regional borders may in fact fall *within* states (e.g., Barnegat Bay, NJ for summer flounder) as opposed to state lines to better reflect differences in species ecology, abundance, and distribution.

Mode Management Concerns

While there was broad interest in further exploring mode-specific management measures, **participants from both the for-hire and private communities expressed concern with how mode management would be developed and applied.** Specific concerns raised included the following:

- One private angler noted the perverse incentives and unintended consequences that could result from for-hire-based mode management—for example, motivating private anglers who own their own vessels to acquire a for-hire permit for the sole purpose of fishing under less restrictive measures and potentially catalyzing development of limited-entry for-hire programs (see Section 6.0).
- A for-hire captain stressed that the application of any mode-based measures would need to have associated accounting (i.e., reporting requirements) as well as accountability.
- A participant noted that in past instances (e.g., for bluefish and Atlantic mackerel[5]), the actual process for setting specific mode-based measures (i.e., development of options) has been unclear, and expressed hope that future development of mode-based options would be transparent and provide ample opportunity for stakeholder input.
- The potential consequences for private angler measures of implementing more liberal for-hire measures under mode management. One private angler noted that the catch "has to come from somewhere" and encouraged using available analytical tools, such as the Recreation Demand Model, to evaluate potential impacts on private anglers under different mode management scenarios.

[5] Atlantic mackerel are currently subject to mode-based recreational management, with the federal possession limit currently 25 fish for private boats and 50 fish for for-hire patrons. More information can be found here: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/atlantic-mackerel/recreational.

Table 2. Key discussion topics, levels of support, and unresolved questions raised during the Mode Management workshop session.

Mode Management (Alternative Set 1)		
Workshop Discussion/Recommendation	**Level of Support/Interest**	**Unresolved Questions/Needed Analysis**
Mode-based measures between the for-hire and private modes are most urgently needed.	Broad agreement among for-hire participants	Guidance needed to avoid overly disparate differences in measures between private and for-hire
Interest in mode management for shore-based anglers (especially lower size limits).	Broad agreement, one dissenter	Should this be pursued through this Amendment, through individual state action, or via another avenue?
Separate measures for charter and headboat modes is a second-order concern.	General agreement	If pursued, need to establish a uniform definition of charter boat versus a headboat (e.g., inspected vs. uninspected)
Specific measures most urgently needed depend on species and region.	Broad agreement	
Bluefish should be removed from consideration for further mode management (and from the Amendment entirely)	Broad agreement, with one dissenter	
Region-specific measures are needed but should be refined to better reflect species ecology and fishery characteristics.	General agreement	Can available data and implementation/enforcement capabilities support redefining regions to better reflect fishery differences (e.g., boundaries set within states)?
Reservations about pursuing mode-based management, including concerns about potential unintended consequences.	Minority view, including several private anglers and one for-hire captain	A need to develop associated accounting/ accountability for any modes granted different measures. Analytical need: How will more liberal for-hire measures affect private angler measures?

4.0 FOR-HIRE RESILIENCY

Staff introduced the draft For-Hire Resiliency Measures Setting Process (Alternative 1C), which would modify the current recreational measures setting process to allow for-hire measures to be set every four years as opposed to every two years (Figure 2), the latter representing the current assessment cycle for these four species. Measures could be developed based on a rolling percentage of catch/effort by mode or using another approach. The For-Hire Resiliency alternative is intended to provide additional predictability/stability for the for-hire sector, although open questions remain regarding how private mode measures should be adjusted (if needed) when for-hire measures remain stable and how accountability measures may need to be altered. In addition, the draft alternative would establish exceptions/triggers that would require for-hire measures to be adjusted earlier than four years, examples of which could include:

- A significant increase in for-hire effort and/or harvest (thresholds to be determined)
- A need for a total harvest reduction above a certain threshold
- Changes to the Recreation Demand Model that demonstrate significant changes in annual harvest

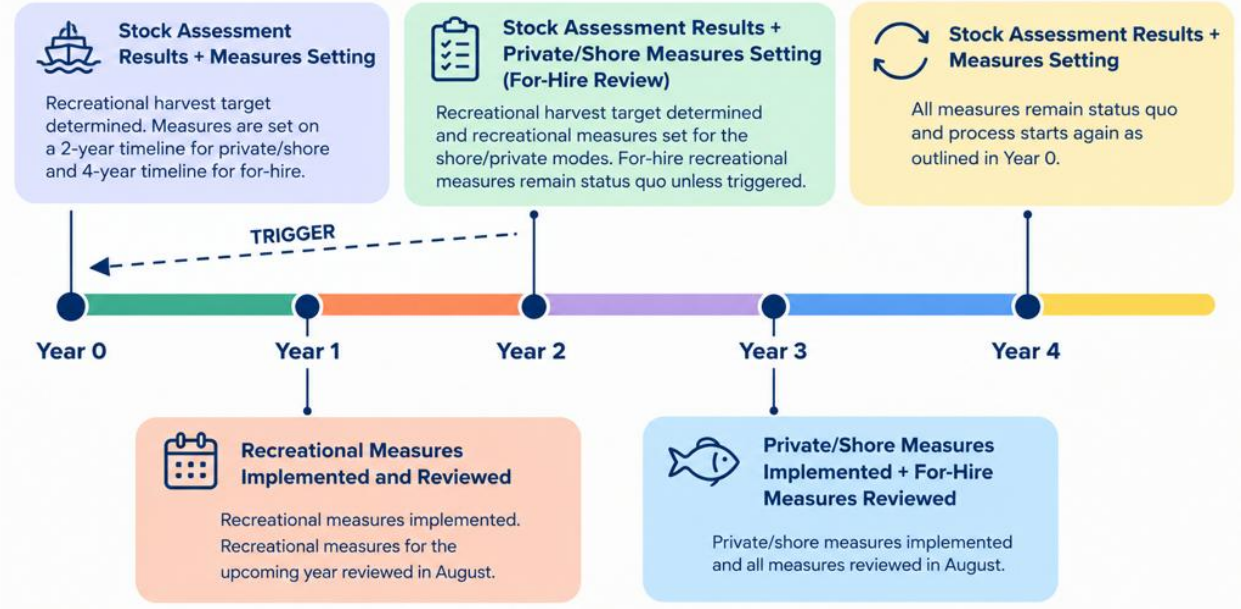


Figure 2. Illustration of the For-Hire Resiliency approach described during the workshop.

4.1 For-Hire Resiliency Breakout Sessions

Workshop participants divided into three breakout groups to discuss the For-Hire Resiliency draft alternative, including the potential benefits/drawbacks of a four-year cycle, potential triggers/thresholds to revert to a two-year cycle, and key risks and uncertainties.

While views on this alternative were mixed, with one breakout group more supportive of the For-Hire Resiliency approach than the other two, **workshop participants generally expressed that the potential risks of a four-year management cycle outweighed the perceived benefits.** The sections below and Table 3 summarize some of the key themes emerging from the breakout sessions and ensuing plenary discussion.

Management Cycle Duration Is a Second-Order Concern

For-hire participants stressed that the **duration of measures was secondary to ensuring that the measures themselves were favorable or at least acceptable to clients.** Generally, participants viewed current measures for few if any species as falling into this category; as a result, pursuit of the For-Hire Resiliency alternative alone would not be sufficient for addressing the needs of the for-hire community. Being "locked in" to restrictive measures for four years was largely viewed as worse than maintaining the existing two-year management cycle with the potential for liberalization during the following two-year cycle.

Some members of the for-hire community as well as supporting businesses (e.g., fishing tackle shops/distributors) did note that a longer management cycle would be beneficial for business planning purposes, as it facilitates marketing/booking charters and anticipating demand for tackle. While the four-year cycle would ensure greater stability, for-hire participants expressed concern about potentially forgoing any liberalization after two years, while less restrictive measures under that scenario would be available to private anglers. At the same time, some viewed the likelihood of such liberalizations as low given their perception of regulations as becoming increasingly restrictive over time. Some for-hire participants also highlighted opportunities to improve predictability within the current two-year cycle; namely, through notification of upcoming measures well in advance of the fishing year.

Key Risks

In addition to for-hire concerns about potentially forgoing liberalizations in the event of shifting to a longer management cycle, several workshop participants highlighted other key risks that the For-Hire Resiliency alternative could engender, including:

- Participants were concerned that managers may apply larger uncertainty buffers if a four-year cycle were to be applied, which could further constrain for-hire catch.
- If measures are tied to the assessment cycle, and if in the future NOAA Fisheries is not able to provide assessments for these four species every two years, the duration of for-hire measures could extend longer (e.g., if future assessments are conducted every three years, the for-hire management cycle could potentially extend to six years).

Triggers For Reverting To a Two-Year Cycle

There was a general understanding of the need for specific triggers/thresholds (e.g., for changes in for-hire effort/catch) to be established that would result in reverting the for-hire management cycle back to two years. However, participants provided limited feedback on the specific trigger examples provided during the workshop. Regarding monitoring substantial increases in catch and/or effort, one participant did express concern with the ability to effectively estimate for-hire catch and effort at the state level given that not all states require for-hire reporting (see Section 6.2). Others proposed that the For-Hire Resiliency alternative be considered in conjunction with changes to the for-hire permitting system that would separate full-time from part-time captains and thereby better control effort and catch (see Section 5.0), reducing the risk of exceeding predetermined thresholds.

Table 3. Key discussion topics, levels of support, and unresolved questions raised during the For-Hire Resiliency workshop session.

For-Hire Resiliency (Alternative 1C)		
Workshop Discussion/Recommendation	**Level of Support/Interest**	**Unresolved Questions/Needed Analysis**
The potential risks of a four-year management cycle outweigh the perceived benefits of increased stability and predictability.	General agreement	Could a longer management cycle increase uncertainty and associated management buffers? Evaluate implications of potential changes to the current two-year assessment cycle. Identify data needs/implementation considerations for combining For-Hire Resiliency with Regional Mode Management.
The duration of measures is secondary to ensuring that the measures themselves are favorable or at least acceptable to clients.	Broad agreement among for-hire operators	
If For-Hire Resiliency is pursued, clearly defined triggers for reverting to a two-year cycle would be needed.	Broad agreement	How can for-hire catch and effort be estimated at the state level given that not all states require for-hire reporting?

5.0 Specialized For-Hire Approaches

Staff described two draft Amendment alternatives that would provide specialized access (e.g., management measures or other flexibilities) for a subset of the for-hire fishery, coupled with additional requirements and qualification criteria. Development of these alternatives was spurred by the interest in separating high-activity operators (e.g., full-time captains or those earning substantial portions of their income from for-hire activity) from more casual/occasional for-hire captains. These approaches could help eliminate the perverse incentive for primarily private anglers to obtain a for-hire permit to take advantage of more liberal for-hire measures while also reducing implementation uncertainty given increased accounting requirements and a smaller universe of for-hire operators fishing under different measures.

Letter of Authorization (LOA) Program (Alternative 1E)

This alternative would establish an LOA program that would implement measures that are conservationally equivalent to federal/coastwide measures but specifically crafted to meet the needs of the for-hire fleet. Federally permitted for-hire vessels could opt in to an LOA program annually (or biennially) if the state in which they operate agrees to recognize special measures for LOA holders. LOA participating vessels could be subject to special eligibility criteria and enhanced reporting requirements. The draft approach shared with workshop participants included multiple sub-alternatives regarding program design (Table 4).

Table 4. Overview of the draft sub-alternatives for the Letter of Authorization Program for for-hire vessels (Alternative 1E).

1E-1. Species	1E-2. Length of Participation	1E-3. Eligibility	1E-4. Reporting Requirements	1E-5. Regional Configuration
1E-1-a. All four species **1E-1-b.** Species eligible for conservation equivalency (CE) (summer flounder, black sea bass) **1E-1-c.** Species not eligible for CE (scup, bluefish)	**1E-2-a.** Annual–states opt-in and participants apply for LOA program on annual basis **1E-2-b.** Length of specifications–states opt-in and participants apply only when for-hire management measures are specified	**1E-3-a**. Any federal permit-holder (if state has opted into LOA program) **1E-3-b**. Additional eligibility criteria (e.g., control date, activity level, additional reporting)	**1E-4-a**. Must complete and cooperate with surveys (e.g., requirement to participate in For-Hire Survey) **1E-4-b**. Flexible Data Gap Reporting – required collection of specific data gap elements	**1E-5-a.** Regional LOA Program with regional LOA measures specified in this action (no more than two regions) **1E-5-b**. Regional LOA measures with regions set via measures process (regions adopted at same time as measures) **1E-5-c.** Coastwide LOA measures

Tiered Permit System (Alternative 2B-3)

The tiered permitting approach is similar to the LOA Program in that it would bifurcate the for-hire fleet, but its design and implementation differ (Table 5). It would establish two for-hire tiers. One tier, as with the LOA Program, would operate under measures tailored to fit the needs of for-hire participants, and like the LOA program may have specific eligibility and reporting requirements. Tier 2, meanwhile, would include other for-hire operators who do not meet the eligibility criteria and would be subject to measures matching the private mode (or potentially developed specifically for Tier 2 permit-holders).

Unlike the LOA Program, which would allow individuals to opt in/out every one or two years, a tiered permitting approach would be a more permanent program, which would improve fishery predictability and analysis. In addition, given that the permit would be issued at the federal level, no opt-in from states would be required, although how this

system works with state measures and state permits emerged as an unresolved question (e.g., is there a way to apply this to vessels that only have a state for-hire permit; what happens if state waters measures are more restrictive, etc.).

Table 5. A preliminary comparison between the LOA (Alternative 1E) and Tiered Permitting (Alternative 2B-3) alternatives reviewed by workshop participants.

LOA	Tiered Permits	Both
• Requires state and vessel opt-in process (increased process complexity) • Non-participants would fish under "typical" for-hire regs • May be easier to establish in near term (long term admin. burden less clear) • Likely easier to modify/suspend/reverse	• More "permanent" approach (would need another action to revise) • Tier 2 regs TBD - separate regs or fish under private angler regs? • Participation more predictable - advantage for analysis • Movement between tiers and/or rolling eligibility could be high admin. burden • No state opt-in proposed - need to consider interaction with state measures	• Eligibility criteria established (should criteria be similar?) • Measures/flexibilities more tailored to for-hire needs (LOA and Tier 1) • Additional requirements under consideration (LOA and Tier 1) • Non-participants/Tier 2 have opportunity to participate in future years

5.1 Specialized For-Hire Approaches Breakout Sessions

Workshop participants again broke into three groups to review the broad concept of specialized for-hire approaches as well as the pros and cons of the LOA program and tiered permitting approaches, respectively (Table 6)**.** As in the For-Hire Resiliency discussion (see Section 4.0), some participants noted that the implementation vehicle (i.e., tiered permitting versus an LOA) was a secondary concern to the actual mode-based measures (e.g., size limit, bag limit, season) that would result. One breakout group appeared to favor the LOA approach while the other two favored the tiered permitting approach; however, in the ensuing report-out discussion, **there was generally greater interest in pursuing a tiered permitting strategy (Alternative 2B-3) as opposed to an LOA program (Alternative 1E).**

Specific advantages to the tiered permitting approach raised by participants included:

- It represents an intermediary approach for putting guardrails on for-hire permitting without necessitating a full transition to limited entry (see Section 6.1).
- Its relative permanence compared to the LOA program would facilitate business planning.

- It would require Tier 1 permit-holders to have a federal permit and thus submit VTRs, improving data collection if it prompted more participants to obtain a federal permit.

Some participants did note potential challenges associated with tiered permitting, including a) its potential perception as de facto limited entry, b) the associated requirement for current state-only permit holders to obtain a federal permit, and c) the need for states to devise a system to recognize/enforce Tier 1 measures. The need to understand how tiered permitting interacts with conservation equivalency and state-specific measures was also noted; for example, what happens if a Tier 1 permit-holder is in a state with stricter state measures? Overall, however, many participants felt that the benefits of a tiered permitting approach outweighed these concerns and noted that there may be lessons to be learned from tiered permitting approaches that have been applied to commercial fisheries. One participant suggested that piloting such a tiered approach through an LOA or Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) may be a prudent first step prior to full-scale development and implementation.

Some participants did appreciate the proposed LOA approach's flexibility given the one- or two-year opt-in structure and also recognized that it may be easier/faster to modify if needed should challenges arise. However, they also noted key challenges. For instance, the LOA approach would restrict management measures to two regions and thus would not account for the coastwide variability and need for flexibility discussed during the Mode Management discussion (see Section 3.0). A for-hire operator noted that implementing an LOA could also complicate MRIP estimates. Participants also cited potential issues that could result from the need for states to opt into the LOA program, including a) putting for-hire operators in states that do not opt in at a disadvantage and b) presenting enforcement challenges for states given the need for states to enforce multiple sets of measures.[6] To mitigate implementation uncertainty related to the LOA approach, one strategy could be to require states that opt into the LOA program to *not* have state-specific mode splits (private/for-hire) for those species.

Regardless of an LOA or tiered permitting approach, participants generally emphasized the importance of **establishing appropriate eligibility criteria for LOA holders or Tier 1 permit holders to ensure that these programs were only available to more active for-hire vessels**. Examples of such eligibility criteria discussed included: 1) a minimum of 50 for-hire trips (per Vessel Trip Reports [VTRs]) each year, regardless of target/harvest

[6] Some of these challenges may also be relevant to the tiered permitting alternative pending future discussions on the mechanics of that approach.

species; 2) vessel/business insurance; and 3) passage of U.S. Coast Guard vessel safety inspections and drug tests. Provisions to account for changing vessel history for a single individual should also be explored, as well as strategies for assessing past effort for state-only permitted vessels primarily fishing in state waters (i.e., not submitting federal VTRs) whose state does not require reporting. Participants also noted that **neither approach should restrict legitimately interested new participants intending to pursue full-time for-hire work**. For such individuals, a secondary qualification criterion such as proof of income as a for-hire deckhand could be appropriate.

Table 6. Key discussion topics, levels of support, and unresolved questions raised during the Specialized For-Hire Approaches workshop session.

Specialized For-Hire Approaches (Alternatives 1E and 2B-3)		
Workshop Discussion/Recommendation	**Level of Support/Interest**	**Unresolved Questions/Needed Analyses**
The tiered permitting strategy (Alternative 2B-3) is a preferable specialized for-hire approach compared to the LOA Program (Alternative 1E).	General agreement	States need to devise a system to recognize/enforce Tier 1 measures and develop Tier 2 measures. How will tiered permitting interact with conservation equivalency and state-specific measures? Are available data/analytical tools sufficient to evaluate potential impacts?
Either specialized approach should include eligibility criteria that ensure that such approaches are only available to more active for-hire vessels (see text for specifics).	Broad agreement	Specific eligibility criteria need to be refined, including accounting for changing vessel history for a single individual. Strategies are needed for assessing past effort for state-only permitted vessels fishing primarily in state waters whose state does not require reporting.
Neither specialized approach should restrict legitimately interested new participants.	Broad agreement	There is a need to develop secondary qualification criteria for these individuals.

6.0 Federal For-Hire Permitting and State Permitting and Reporting

The draft Amendment included several alternatives intended to increase the effectiveness of any mode management approaches by limiting the ability of permitted for-hire vessels to freely move in between modes to take advantage of specific measures. In addition, draft for-hire reporting requirements at the state and/or federal levels were proposed to improve data collection from this sector. A summary of alternatives, along with key discussion points by workshop participants, are described below and in Table 8.

6.1 Federal For-Hire Permitting

Staff described draft federal for-hire permitting alternatives to limit and/or prohibit new entrants, which could be considered in conjunction with or independently of mode management alternatives (Section 3.0). Alternative approaches to the current open-access for-hire system included: 1) a moratorium on new for-hire permits (Alternative 2B-1) with or without a sunset provision; or 2) for-hire capacity limitations (Alternative 2B-2), which would establish qualification criteria (e.g., effort, landings thresholds) to reduce latent effort in the fishery (Table 7) and thus mitigate implementation uncertainty while providing potential pathways for new entrants.[7]

Workshop participants broadly understood the rationale for these alternatives and the need to mitigate perverse incentives while ensuring that any mode-based management approaches were applied to those who most needed them for business purposes. However, **participants generally expressed opposition to implementing a federal for-hire permit moratorium (2B-1) or a limited entry system (2B-2)**. Participants noted that the decline of full-time participants has been a defining issue and that while limited entry could reduce the risk of individuals' ability to "game the system," it was outweighed by the perceived barriers to new industry entrants (and future for-hire industry growth). Participants also cited the unintended consequences that could result from limited entry, including permit consolidation. The specialized for-hire approaches discussed in Section 5.0 (with eligibility criteria to identify potential LOA holders or Tier 1 permit holders) were viewed as a better strategy for addressing permitting challenges than a moratorium or limited-entry program. Participants favored these approaches as they would establish a pool of more full-time operators while maintaining an open-access option with the potential to move between categories based on activity.

[7] Discussion on a third approach to reform federal for-hire permitting, the development of a tiered permitting strategy (Alternative 2B-3), can be found in Section 5.0.

Table 7. The number of for-hire permits that would qualify based on the Amendment's federal for-hire permitting sub-alternatives (2B-2). The maximum number of permits issued in any given year between 2015 and 2024 is provided for reference, as well as the actual total number of unique permits issued prior to 2/11/2025.

Qualification Criteria Sub-Options	Summer Flounder	Scup	Black Sea Bass	Bluefish
2B-2-a: For-hire vessels that have submitted at least one for-hire VTR in the last 5 years (2021-2025)	563	501	567	583
2B-2-b: For-hire vessels that have submitted at least 1 for-hire VTR in at least 3 out of the last 10 years (2016-2025).	601	532	598	626
2B-2-c: For-hire vessels that have reported landings of the relevant species at least once in the last 10 years (2015-2024).	847	769	852	877
2B-2-d: For-hire vessels that have reported landings of the relevant species in at least 3 out of the last 10 years (2016-2025).	479	431	474	481
Max. number of permits issued in any one year from 2015-2024	964	967	831	954
Number of total unique vessel permits issued at any time prior to 2/11/2025	4,053	2,791	3,158	3,195

Federal For-Hire Reporting

In addition, this alternative set included establishing a minimum threshold of participation in the NOAA Fisheries For-Hire Telephone Survey to enhance data collection (Alternative 2C). For-hire and private workshop participants alike agreed that **requiring participation in the For-Hire Survey would be beneficial for data collection and should be explored further**. One participant noted that submitted data could potentially be used to validate electronic Vessel Trip Report data. Recommended required compliance with the For-Hire Survey varied but ranged from 75-100%.

The group also discussed not only developing requirements for the For-Hire Survey but also enhancing requirements for VTRs. **Namely, for-hire workshop participants strongly**

supported reinstating a "Did Not Fish" (DNF) report requirement in order to get a better sense of vessel activity levels and latent effort, including assessing whether there are some permitted vessels that are fishing but not complying with reporting requirements.

6.2 State For-Hire Permitting and Reporting

Staff described that state-level for-hire permitting and reporting requirements are highly variable among states. The draft Amendment includes alternatives designed to standardize such requirements, including requiring implementation of state-level for-hire limited entry programs (Alternative 3B) and required state-level for-hire reporting (Alternative 3C). The goals of these alternatives are to increase the effectiveness of any mode management approaches, improve consistency among states, and enhance the ability to analyze the performance of mode-based management measures. At the same time, there may be barriers to implementing such requirements (e.g., legislation) in some states.

As with the federal for-hire permit discussion (Section 6.1), **there were broad concerns about instituting limited entry programs at the state level**, although some private anglers did view it as potentially valuable from a client safety perspective (e.g., risks associated with a for-hire operator who does not possess required safety gear or appropriate insurance). At the same time, there was interest in ensuring that for-hire permits were only issued to legitimate and active for-hire operators as opposed to those simply seeking to take advantage of favorable mode-based measures. Criteria could include some minimum activity threshold and other evidence of good standing (liability insurance, drug tests, etc.[8]), similar to what was discussed for Specialized For-Hire Approaches (Section 5.0). Rhode Island's for-hire permitting program in particular was cited as having appropriate criteria for issuing for-hire permits that could be used as a model elsewhere. That being said, there was some tension between opposition to limited entry based on past activity or other criteria and support for using activity/criteria to restrict permit issuance to legitimate for-hire operators (or legitimate new entrants) moving forward. **There was interest in the Commission's further exploring strategies to strengthen and standardize state-based for-hire requirements—in particular, determining what is possible/feasible for states to achieve.**

Workshop participants generally viewed **state-level reporting requirements (currently only in place in a handful of states) as important for catch monitoring and**

[8] While individual states can include these as criteria for issuing for-hire permits, they cannot be used as criteria at the federal level.

understanding the outcomes of mode-based management, particularly in states or regions where for-hire operators holding only state-level permits account for substantial catches of the relevant species.

Table 8. Key discussion topics, levels of support, and unresolved questions raised during the Federal For-Hire Permitting and State For-Hire Permitting and Reporting workshop session.

Federal For-Hire Permitting and State For-Hire Permitting and Reporting (Alternatives 2A, 2B-1, 2B-2, 2C, and 3)		
Workshop Discussion/Recommendation	**Level of Support/Interest**	**Unresolved Questions/Needed Analysis**
Opposition to implementing a federal for-hire permit moratorium (2B-1) or limited entry system (2B-2)	Broad agreement	Eligibility criteria sub-options could be refined for potential application to other alternatives that maintain new entrant access (e.g., tiered permits); suggest a higher activity threshold for these options (e.g., submission of 30, 40 or 50 eVTRs for any species in a year).
Required participation in the For-Hire Survey (2C)	Broad agreement	What is an acceptable compliance rate? 75%? 100%?
Reinstate a "Did Not Fish" (DNF) for-hire report requirement	Broad agreement	Revisit status of recent Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) discussions of reinstating these requirements.
Opposition to implementing uniform, mandatory state-level for-hire limited entry programs (3B)	General agreement; some private anglers suggested that limited entry could be helpful from a client safety perspective	
The Commission should further explore strategies to strengthen/standardize requirements for for-hire permits (i.e., enhance permit requirements without requiring development of limited entry programs).	Broad agreement	Rhode Island's program may be a useful model. Is a need to determine what is possible/feasible for states to achieve.
State-level for-hire reporting requirements should be further pursued	Broad agreement	Feasibility needs to be explored among states.

7.0 Workshop Synthesis and Priorities

Workshop discussions highlighted substantial interest in exploring changes to recreational management approaches to better support the ongoing viability of the for-hire fishery. At the same time, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this challenge, as substantial regional variability in fishery characteristics and for-hire needs must be taken into account. As a result, state-federal coordination is critical to develop and implement appropriate strategies, as is leveraging lessons learned from past efforts (e.g., on mode splits, permitting and reporting).

Table 9 synthesizes some of the key messages on draft alternatives emerging from workshop discussions, including views on existing alternatives, ideas for new alternatives/approaches, and open questions/data needs. Please note that the below table does not represent consensus views of participants; for additional details please visit the relevant report section.

There were differing perspectives regarding the pace at which the Amendment should move forward, in particular with regard to the implementation of mode management approaches, For-Hire Resiliency, and Specialized For-Hire approaches. Some cautioned against the wholesale application of these approaches in the near term, with suggestions including piloting an approach for one species and/or delaying implementation until recalibrated Marine Recreational Information Program catch and effort estimates are available. Others emphasized that these challenges and potential approaches had been discussed for years, and it was urgent that such strategies be implemented quickly to provide relief to the for-hire industry.

Table 9. Synthesis of workshop perspectives and areas of agreement. For views on unresolved questions and/or needed analyses, please see the relevant report section.

Key Workshop Discussion Topics and Recommendations		
Alt. Set	**Workshop Discussion/Recommendation**	**Level of Support/Interest**
Overarching Comments	*There is an urgent need for action to provide relief to the struggling for-hire fleet.*	Broad agreement among for-hire participants
	Remove bluefish from further consideration in the Amendment.	Broad agreement, with one opposing view
Mode Management: Overall	*Mode-based measures between the for-hire and private modes are most urgently needed.*	Broad agreement among for-hire participants
	Interest in mode management for shore-based anglers (especially lower size limits).	Broad agreement, one dissenter
	Separate measures for charter and headboat modes is a second-order concern.	General agreement
	Specific measures most urgently needed depend on species and region.	Broad agreement
	Region-specific measures are needed but should be refined to better reflect species ecology and fishery characteristics.	General agreement
	Reservations about pursuing mode-based management, including concerns about potential unintended consequences.	Minority view, including several private anglers and one for-hire captain
For-Hire Resiliency (Alt. 1C)	*The potential risks of a four-year management cycle outweigh the perceived benefits of increased stability and predictability.*	General agreement
	The duration of measures is secondary to ensuring that the measures themselves are favorable or at least acceptable to clients.	Broad agreement among for-hire participants
	If For-Hire Resiliency is pursued, clearly defined triggers for reverting to a two-year cycle would be needed.	Broad agreement
Specialized For-Hire Approaches (Alts. 1E and 2B-3)	*The tiered permitting strategy (Alternative 2B-3) is a preferable specialized for-hire approach compared to the LOA Program (Alternative 1E).*	General agreement
	Either approach should include eligibility criteria that ensure that such approaches are only available to more active for-hire vessels.	Broad agreement
	Neither specialized approach should restrict legitimately interested new participants.	Broad agreement
Federal For-Hire Permitting and State For-Hire Permitting and Reporting (Alts. 2A, 2B-1, 2B-2, 2C, and 3)	*Opposition to implementing a federal for-hire permit moratorium (2B-1) or limited entry system (2B-2)*	Broad agreement
	Required participation in the For-Hire Survey (2C)	Broad agreement
	Reinstate a "Did Not Fish" (DNF) for-hire report requirement	Broad agreement
	Opposition to implementing state-level for-hire limited entry programs (3B)	General agreement; some private anglers suggested that limited entry could be helpful from a client safety perspective
	The Commission should further explore strategies to strengthen/standardize requirements for for-hire permits.	Broad agreement
	State-level for-hire reporting requirements should be further pursued.	Broad agreement

8.0 Next Steps

Outcomes from the Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop will be discussed at the November 2026 joint meeting of the Council and Commission's Policy Board, which will direct the FMAT/PDT to further refine draft Amendment alternatives. The Council/Policy Board then plans to approve a draft range of alternatives in January 2027, which will be used as the basis for a Public Hearing Document to circulate in Spring 2027. The Council and Commission anticipate taking final action on this Amendment in August 2027. Full details of the anticipated timeline can be found in Figure 3.

One for-hire participant asked whether it would be possible to organize a follow-up meeting with the same group of workshop participants to provide additional guidance on draft alternatives as they are further developed. GARFO and Council staff noted that while such a meeting could be possible (likely via webinar), it would need to be discussed with Council and Commission leadership and the decision to do so would have to be made by Council and Policy Board members, as it would likely delay the Amendment timeline. They also noted that many workshop attendees sit on relevant Advisory Panels which are scheduled to meet in summer 2027 to provide further input on alternatives.

September 2026	Stakeholder workshop to further develop draft alternatives
November 12, 2026	Council/Policy Board meet to review workshop report and direct FMAT/PDT to refine alternatives (Commission's Annual Meeting) https://asmfc.org/events/2026-annual-meeting/
January 2027	Council/Policy Board approve range of alternatives for public hearings
Winter 2027	FMAT/PDT develops draft public hearing document/draft amendment
Spring 2027	Council/Policy Board approve public hearing document/draft amendment for public comment
Spring/Summer 2027	Public hearings and comment period
Summer 2027	AP meeting; FMAT/PDT meetings to provide recommendations on final action
August 2027	**Final action**
Fall 2027	Staff develop and submit required documentation to NOAA Fisheries
TBD	Effective date of management changes (*implementation timeline depends on final alternatives adopted*)

Figure 3. Tentative timeline for the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment.

9.0 Conclusion

The Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop provided an opportunity for diverse recreational fishing interests to engage in constructive dialogue regarding the potential benefits, challenges, and implementation considerations associated with the draft Amendment alternatives. Although participants expressed differing perspectives on

specific alternatives, recurring themes included the importance of maintaining viable for-hire fisheries, considering the needs and interests of private anglers, improving accountability and reporting, and avoiding unintended barriers to for-hire participation.

The workshop generated a range of suggestions for refining existing alternatives, exploring additional approaches, and conducting analyses to better understand the potential implications of the draft Amendment alternatives. These findings provide a foundation for continued consideration of the Amendment by the Council, Commission, and FMAT/PDT. As the Amendment moves forward, continued stakeholder engagement and evaluation of the tradeoffs associated with different management approaches will be important for developing alternatives that appropriately balance the needs of all recreational fishing modes while meeting conservation and management objectives.

APPENDIX I. WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Workshop Participants

Workshop participants were selected via application. A Google Form application was developed by the Workshop Planning Team that included questions regarding applicant primary role/affiliation, region, species of interest, fishing experience, management familiarity/engagement, and rationale for workshop interest. The application was distributed via the Council's and Commission's communications outlets in June 2026. A total of 59 applications were received, which were reviewed by the FMAT/PDT in July before forwarding recommended participants to the Council and Policy Board members for final approval. The 22 selected applicants were notified via email on July 28, 2026.

Name	Primary Role	Affiliation (if applicable)
Capt. Rick Bellavance	Charter Boat	F/V Priority Too
Marc Berger	Charter Boat	Lucky Strike Charters
Raymond Jarvis	Charter Boat	Salt of the Earth Sportfishing
Jill Maganza-Ruiz	Charter Boat	November Rain Charters
Christopher Mozitis	Charter Boat	Wee Cat Charters
Michael Pierdinock	Charter Boat	Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Assoc.
Walter Richard Wasdin Jr	Charter Boat	Reel Blessed Sportfishing
William Howard Bogan Jr	Headboat	Vessel "Jamaica"
Victor M. Bunting	Headboat	Ocean Princess Inc.
Mark DeJong	Headboat	Celtic Quest Fleet
Harry D. Parsons II	Headboat	Fisherman's Wharf
Michael Pirri	Headboat	Flying Connie Charters
Kyle White	Headboat	Rudee Tours
Nick Cicero	Supporting Business	Folsom Corporation
Greg Cudnik	Supporting Business	Fisherman's Headquarters
Michael Waine	Advocate	American Sportfishing Association
Peter R. Belasco	Private Angler (Shore)	
Allan C. Butler	Private Angler (Boat)	
Paul Gerard Caruso	Private Angler (Boat)	
Robert J. Lorenz	Private Angler (Boat)	
Lenny Rudow	Private Angler (Boat)	FishTalk Magazine
Austin Thurlow	Private Angler (Boat)	

Workshop Planning Team

Kiley Dancy	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC)
Hannah Hart	MAFMC
Tracey Bauer	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)
Chelsea Tuohy	ASMFC
Savannah Lewis	NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)
Willy Goldsmith	Pelagic Strategies (Facilitator)

Other In-Person Attendees

Matt Ayer	Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) (Sector Separation Amendment FMAT/PDT Member)
Joe Cimino	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (MAFMC Chair)
Travis Ford	GARFO
Martin Gary	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NY DEC)
Dan McKiernan	MA DMF (ASMFC Chair)
Paul Risi	MAFMC Member
Rachel Sysak	NY DEC (Sector Separation Amendment FMAT/PDT Member)
Geoff White	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

Webinar Attendees

Julia Beaty	Jessica Daher	Jesse Hornstein	John Maniscalco
Anna Beckwith	Cynthia F	Greg Hueth	Nichola Meserve
Joseph Beneventine	Corrin Flora	Raymond Kane	Jose Montanez
Hayden Berry	Tony Friedrich	Carrie Kennedy	Muffley, Brandon
Sue Bertoline	Jim Gilmore	Toni Kerns	Adam Nowalsky
Kurt Blanchard	Melanie Griffin	John Lake	Matt Rigdon
Jeff Brust	Jake Hardy	Michael Luisi	Jason Seman
Mario Campo	Brendan Harrison	Bradlie M	Jenny Smith
			Kelly Whitmore

APPENDIX II. WORKSHOP AGENDA

Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop
September 23-24, 2026

Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel
1100 Old Elkridge Landing Road
Linthicum Heights, MD, 21090

Listen-Only Webinar:

- Click here to join the webinar. (If prompted, enter Meeting Number: 2334 139 8905; Password: sectorseparation). After you connect, you will have the option to choose whether to use your phone or computer microphone and speakers for audio.
- For phone only access: 1-415-655-0001; Access code: 2334 139 8905.

Note: This webinar will be broadcast in listen-only mode and will not include breakout discussions.

AGENDA
(Times are Eastern Time and approximate)

DAY 1: Wednesday, September 23		
Time	**Title**	**Presenter**
9:30 – 10:00	**Arrival and Coffee**	
10:00 – 10:10	**Welcome and Opening Remarks**	Joe Cimino, MAFMC Chair Dan McKiernan, ASMFC Chair
10:10 – 10:20	**Workshop Overview**	Willy Goldsmith, Pelagic Strategies
10:20 – 10:45	**Attendee Introductions**	
10:45 – 11:15	**Overview: Recreational Sector Separation Amendment**	Kiley Dancy, MAFMC staff
11:15 – 11:25: BREAK		
11:25 – 12:15	**Session 1: Mode Management**	Chelsea Tuohy, ASMFC staff
12:15 – 1:15: LUNCH		

1:15 – 1:40	**Session 2: For-Hire Resiliency**	Chelsea Tuohy, ASMFC staff Savannah Lewis, NOAA Fisheries staff
1:40 – 2:30	**Breakout Session: For-Hire Resiliency**	
2:30 – 2:45: BREAK		
2:45 – 3:10	**Breakout Session Report-Out and Discussion**	
3:10 – 3:35	**Session 3: Specialized For-Hire Approaches**	Hannah Hart, MAFMC staff Kiley Dancy, MAFMC staff
3:35 – 4:25	**Breakout Session: Specialized For-Hire Approaches**	
4:25 – 4:50	**Breakout Session Report-Out and Discussion**	
4:50 – 5:00	**Wrap Up and Preview of Day 2**	Willy Goldsmith, Pelagic Strategies
DAY 2: Thursday, September 24		
8:30 – 8:45	**Day 2 Welcome, Recap, and Agenda**	Willy Goldsmith, Pelagic Strategies
8:45 – 10:00	**Session 4: Federal For-Hire Permitting and State Permitting and Reporting**	Tracey Bauer, ASMFC staff
10:00 – 10:15: BREAK		
10:15 – 11:00	**New Ideas Session: What Is Missing?**	
11:00 – 11:45	**Workshop Synthesis and Priorities for Further Development**	
11:45 – 12:00	**Discussion of Next Steps**	MAFMC/ASMFC staff
12:00: ADJOURN		

APPENDIX III. ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop

September 23-24, 2026 | Baltimore, MD

List of Acronyms/Key Terms*

ACL	Annual Catch Limit: The level of catch (harvest plus dead discards) for a stock for each sector (commercial and recreational) intended to ensure that overfishing does not occur.
ASMFC (or Commission)	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission: Coordinates state management of bluefish, scup, summer flounder, and black sea bass in state waters.
CE	Conservation Equivalency: A process specific to summer flounder and black sea bass that allows for setting state- or region-specific recreational measures instead of coastwide measures. Under conservation equivalency, federal waters measures are waived and anglers are subject to the measures of the state to which they return.
EFP	Exempted Fishing Permit: A temporary specialized federal permit issued by NOAA Fisheries that authorizes vessels to conduct fishing activities otherwise prohibited by regulations; primarily for scientific research, data collection, and innovative technology testing.
FMAT/PDT	Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team: Technical team responsible for developing and refining draft Amendment alternatives and analysis, based on direction from the Council and Policy Board.
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
GARFO	NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office: Approves and implements federal management measures.
Limited Access	A management approach that restricts the number of participants in a fishery (for example, for-hire permits).
LOA	Letter of Authorization: Document issued by NOAA Fisheries that grants a vessel the ability to conduct activities that would otherwise be prohibited. LOA programs are incorporated into the Federal regulations and remain in place until modified via subsequent action.
MAFMC (or Council)	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council: Manages bluefish, scup, summer flounder, and black sea bass in federal waters.

Measures	Recreational bag, size, and season limits
Mode Management	Establishing separate measures such as size limits, bags limits, and/or seasons for different components of the recreational fishery (such as different measures for private anglers versus for-hire vessels) while continuing to manage the recreational fishery under a single shared Recreational Harvest Limit.
Policy Board	ASMFC Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board
RDM	Recreation Demand Model: A statistical model developed for summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup that combines information about angler behavior/preferences and fish population estimates to predict the effect of alternative management strategies on coastwide recreational harvest, releases, angler welfare, and fishing effort. Results are used to determine the amount of change in harvest needed, and set recreational bag and size limits and seasons expected to achieve the change required.
RHL	Recreational Harvest Limit: The total amount of fish that can be harvested annually by the recreational sector across all modes.
RMS	Recreational Measures Setting Process: The approach for setting recreational management measures for bluefish, scup, summer flounder, and black sea bass finalized through the 2025 Recreational Measures Setting Process Framework.
VTR	Vessel Trip Report. Federally permitted for-hire vessels must submit electronic VTRs within 48 hours of trip completion. State level requirements vary.

*Some of these definitions are specific to their use in the context of the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment.