



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

(617) 626-1520 | [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)



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February 9, 2024

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

#### **DMF TO HOST STAKEHOLDER MEETING REGARDING NEWBURYPORT DEPURATION PLANT AND CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPURATION FISHERY FOR SOFTSHELL CLAMS**

The Division of Marine Fisheries has scheduled an in-person stakeholder meeting to discuss the status of DMF's Newburyport Depuration Plant ("Plant") and the challenges facing the softshell clam depuration fishery. These include: infrastructure issues facing the Plant; potential alternatives for shellfish harvesters while Plant operations are suspended; performance trends in the depuration fishery; the possibility of reopening the Plant in the future; and the potential reclassification of certain Boston Harbor growing areas. The meeting will be held at 6:30PM on Thursday, February 15 at DMF's Gloucester Field Office. Prior to the meeting, from 2:30 to 4:00PM, DMF staff will host tours of the Plant and the impacted saltwater well heads for interested constituents.

On November 24, 2023, DMF temporarily closed the Plant to depuration activity because of failing infrastructure. Specifically, due to persistent coastal erosion aggravated by recent storms, the two saltwater wells that feed the depuration operations at the Plant were exposed and are no longer functional. Repairing the Plant likely requires significant capital investment and permitting, and there likely will be a lapse in time before the facility could potentially reopen. Moreover, the Plant will continue to face substantial infrastructure challenges due to the site's vulnerability to erosion and sea level rise, as evidenced by flooding in last month's storm.

#### **Meeting Information:**

6:30PM  
Thursday, February 15, 2024  
DMF's Annisquam River Station  
30 Emerson Avenue  
Gloucester, MA 01930

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