



David E. Pierce
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

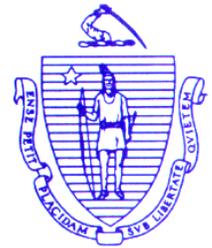
Division of Marine Fisheries

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April 14, 2017

APPLICATION OF INTEREST FOR PARTICIPATION IN SMALL MESH AREA 1 WHITING EXEMPTED FISHERY – YEAR 2

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) seeks to gather a list of interested permit holders for possible participation in the second year of an experimental fishery in Small Mesh Area 1 (SMA 1) during July 1 – 14, 2017. Those interested should fill out the second page of this application and return as directed.

MA DMF then will invite those pre-qualified to bid on a formal Request for Responses (RFR) for inclusion under a federal Exempted Fishing Permit to conduct the second year of DMF's expanded whiting project. Pre-qualification will be limited to those impacted by the recent groundfish disaster given this work is being funded through the Commonwealth's Groundfish Disaster Economic Assistance Program.

As with the first year, no compensation is planned for participation; however, vessels will be able to keep and land whiting and red hake. MA DMF will provide the required observer coverage at no cost to the vessel.

Background

The goal of DMF's expanding whiting project is to collect and present data, over two years, on catch and bycatch in prioritized small-mesh exemption areas and times by assigning sea samplers/observers to interested commercial fishing trawlers outside current limits. Such information is critical to any management response by the New England Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries to fishermen's expressed persistent interest to modify the timing of openings of small-mesh exemption areas to target silver hake/whiting in response to perception of changes in migration patterns and/or availability.

DMF partnered with five vessels (29 trips) over 10 days during July 1 – 14, 2016 in SMA 1. Four vessels were originally scheduled to work in the experimental western Raised Footrope Exemption area (western RFE) but only one decided to participate for a total of two trips. Based on the limited data gathered and lack of continued interest, DMF will not be conducting a second year of research in the western RFE.

Year one results are under analysis, including a comparison of experimental results with observer data from the open whiting season. Draft results were presented at a November 9th meeting with industry participants and GARFO representatives in Gloucester. It was decided at the meeting to continue fieldwork in SMA I in 2017, but to curtail any work in the western RFE.

Please fill out the following requested information and return by **April 30, 2017** to:

David Chosid
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
1213 Purchase St., 3rd Floor
New Bedford, MA 02740
FAX: 508.990.0449
Email: david.chosid@state.ma.us

Owner Name (print): _____ Business Name: _____

Owner Signature: _____

Business Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Email: _____

Did you participate in year one of DMF's expanded whiting project? Yes: ____ No: ____

If no, did you qualify for aid as a permit holder under the Commonwealth's Groundfish Disaster Economic Assistance Program? (check all that apply) Bin 1: ____ Bin 2: ____ Bin 3: ____

Vessel Name: _____ Federal Permit #: _____

Vessel Size (LOA): _____ Vessel HP: _____ Home Port: _____

Small-Mesh Areas Typically Fished: _____

Species Targeted: _____

Other comments/suggestions: _____

For additional questions, feel free to contact David Chosid
by phone at (508) 990-2860 ext. 140 or above email.