

Public Meetings Scheduled: MA Groundfish Disaster Spending Plan

The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is developing a plan to distribute federal disaster funds to the Commonwealth's groundfishery. Prior to submitting a formal spending plan to NOAA Fisheries, DMF is soliciting input from fishermen and community interests on potential uses of these funds.

On May 28, 2014 the state fishery directors from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York, in partnership with NOAA, announced a framework for the distribution of \$32.8-million in federal disaster aid monies to the New England groundfish industry. In the consensus framework, the six states will apportion available monies equally between three themes (roughly \$11 million in each): for direct assistance, for individual state spending plans, and to support a federally funded buyout or industry-funded buyback.

Federal disaster aid stems from a September 13, 2012 disaster declaration in the Northeast multispecies (groundfish) fishery by the Acting Secretary of Commerce. The disaster designation was requested by Governor Deval Patrick and other elected officials recognizing the severe hardships being faced by commercial fishermen – hardships being felt well before the official May 1, 2013 federal designation.

Initial spending options for the state program, developed by DMF with the assistance of an Industry-based Working Group, include:

- **Direct aid to commercial groundfishermen excluded from initial federal aid and for-hire fishermen;**
- **Crew direct aid & training;**
- **Cooperative research;**
- **Local seafood marketing; and**
- **Shoreside industry direct aid and grants/loans**

Public Meetings Schedule:

North Shore
Monday, July 14, 2014 - 6:00 PM
MA DMF Annisquam River Station
30 Emerson Ave.
Gloucester, MA

South Shore
Tuesday, July 15, 2014 – 6:00 PM
Radisson - Plymouth Harbor
180 Water St.
Plymouth, MA

New Bedford
Wednesday, July 16, 2014 – 6:00 PM
Waypoint Event Center
Marriott Fairfield Inn & Suites
185 MacArthur Dr.

Cape Cod
Thursday, July 17, 2014 – 6:00 PM
Chatham High School
425 Crowell Rd.
Chatham, MA