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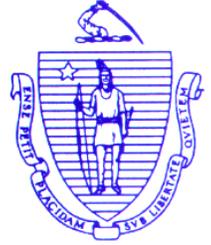
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*Commissioner*

June 12, 2012

Marine Fisheries Advisory

### **ASMFC LOBSTER ADDENDUM XVIII PUBLIC HEARING: JUNE 21**

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Massachusetts and Rhode Island have scheduled a joint hearing to gather public comment on Draft Amendment XVIII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The date, time and location are:

*June 21, 2012; 6:00 PM*

Tiverton High School Auditorium

100 North Brayton Road

Tiverton, Rhode Island

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Mark Gibson (RI Division of Fish and Wildlife) at 401.423.1935

The Draft Addendum proposes a consolidation program for lobster conservation management areas 2 and 3 (LCMAs 2 & 3) to address latent effort and reduce the overall number of traps allocated. The specific management tools being considered in the addendum include trap allocations, trap banking, and controlled growth for participants in the fishery. The Draft Addendum proposes unique plans for each area.

The Draft Addendum responds to the depleted condition of the Southern New England (SNE) lobster resource and the Board's intent to scale the capacity of the SNE fishery to the size of the SNE resource, with an initial goal of reducing qualified trap allocation by at least 25% over a five to ten year period. Since the scope of the SNE resource encompasses all or part of six of the seven LCMAs established by Amendment 3, additional addenda will be developed to address effort reductions in the remaining LCMAs.

In order to consolidate the fishery, latent effort must be addressed. Latent effort is traps allocated to an individual that are not fished. The limited entry programs for each LCMA have unique qualifying criteria and eligibility periods, resulting in differing levels of latent effort among the areas. Consequently, measures to remove latent effort from the fishery will need to be developed for each LCMA based on the current amount of latent effort. Consolidation is likely to occur as permit holders respond to the annual trap allocation cuts by obtaining allocation from permit holders who downsize their operations or leave the fishery through the transferability program.

For trap limits to be effective in reducing harvest and rebuilding the stock, latent effort must first be addressed to prevent this effort from coming back into the fishery as the stock grows and catch rates increase. It is anticipated that long-term reductions in traps fished will occur as a result of this addendum.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending the public hearing or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum is available on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)) under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on July 10, 2012** and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org) (Subject line: American Lobster Draft Addendum XVIII).