

**FISHERY COUNCIL ENDORSES
PROGRESSIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:
Concept developed by Cape Cod fishermen
expanded across New England**



PORTLAND, MAINE: The governing body for New England fisheries decided Thursday to build upon a model pioneered by Cape Cod fishermen in an effort to drastically alter and improve the management of our region's historic groundfish fishery. In approving Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Plan, the New England Fishery Management Council overwhelmingly endorsed sweeping changes to the management of groundfish species including cod, haddock and flounder. The Council's decisions will phase out existing and failed management practices in favor of measures that will rebuild dwindling groundfish stocks while allowing fishermen more flexibility.

"We've waited a long time to see the Council take the actions it did today and show a commitment to the success of Sectors," said Peter Taylor, President of Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association and lifelong fisherman. "There are still going to be tough days ahead, but Sectors will finally allow fishermen around New England to get back to the business of fishing."

This watershed vote comes after more than two years of work to craft a better groundfish management plan that could meet new federal mandates while protecting the livelihoods of fishermen. To date, fishermen have worked under rules restricting the time they can spend fishing and pounds of fish that can be landed each day. But this outgoing management scheme led to wasteful fishing practices, reduced profits for fishermen, and a failure to end overfishing on many of the region's once abundant groundfish stocks.

Under the plan for 2010 - now awaiting approval from National Marine Fisheries Service - fishermen could join one of 19 community-based harvesting cooperatives. In exchange for additional catch monitoring and increased accountability, the Sectors will receive an annual allocation of fish and have some flexibility in cooperatively harvesting that portion.

The Hook Fishermen's Association paved the way for the new system by developing and implementing the region's first and only existing Sectors in 2004.

Eric Brazer, manager of both existing Sectors, said: "Today the Council endorsed a progressive program that creates strong incentives for fishermen to join Sectors. This will help groundfish fishermen in other ports enjoy the increased profitability and flexibility provided by a Sector while enabling us all to continue rebuilding depleted fish stocks."

"The Council had some tough decisions to make, but I think by and large they did right by the resource and the industry."

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Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association

The Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association is a nationally recognized, non-profit organization that aligns protection of the oceans with the economic interests of our historic fishing community. The Hook Fishermen's Association supports stewardship of coastal ecosystems through education, research, and policy programs. Started in 1991 by the local fishing fleet, the Association is now the leading community fisheries organization in the region. The Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association is taking action now to make sure there are fish for future generations.

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