

**ALWTRP Public Hearing
Urban Forestry Center
Portsmouth, NH
August 20, 2013**

**NMFS PRD Staff—Dave Gouveia, Kate Swails, Mike Asaro, John Higgins,
Number in attendance: 36
Including:**

- Cheri Patterson, NH Department of Fish and Game, Take Reduction Team State Representative
- Bonnie Hyler, Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association, Take Reduction Team Industry Representative
- Bob Nudd, NH Lobstermen’s Association, Take Reduction Team Industry Representative

B. Hyler read a statement on behalf of her constituents. She will be providing written comments as well.

Closures

One commenter mentioned that the closures appeared to be based on hotspots of whale sightings and not co-occurrence like the Take Reduction Team had decided.

Commenters were opposed to closures. Some stated that trawling up should be tried first before drastic closures were implemented. Closures would result in walls of gear or gear conflict.

One commenter wondered if the proposed closures are the correct area to close and if in the future another area would be better. There are other biological elements at play that could change the closure area. Biological conditions change and whale transit paths could change as well.

Gear Marking

Some commenters were concerned about the proposed gear marking in NH proposed exempt waters. Moving to and from the exempt would cause a challenge to remark gear. Commenters were also concerned that the NH exempt waters would be marked the same color as the ME exempt waters.

Some were concerned with marking multiple times as it is difficult to mark as you shorten and lengthen your endline.

Some support for the additional marking minus the proposed marking of exempt waters.

Increasing the number of traps per trawl

Commenters were in support of the proposed NH state waters exemption and hoped for flexibility in Federal waters.

One commenter suggested establishing a minimum vessel size for the trawling up requirements.

One commenter stated that trawls present a safety issue for draggers. Minimum trawl length shouldn't exceed 10. Require a radar reflector and pennants on each end.

Other

Some commenters stated that it was difficult to ask industry to do more when the right whale population has been increasing. The current measures are working.

One commenter mentioned that Area 3 has already reduced traps by 30% and will reduce by another 25% with a 10% passive reduction with the transfer of permits.

One commenter requested that the implementation date of the final rule be June 1st to match the trap/tag date and not in the middle of a season.

Some support for any alternative that includes a NH state water exemption.

Some questions about who enforces the current rules and if the proposed rules will be enforced.