



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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MEMORANDUM

Date: March 31, 2022

To: Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee (EOPC)

From: José Montañez, Staff

Subject: EOPC Webinar (May 10, 2022; 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.): Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Aquaculture Policy and Aquaculture in the Mid-Atlantic Region Background Document (Drafts)

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) staff developed a document entitled “Aquaculture in the Mid-Atlantic Region,” which provides information on current and future aquaculture activities in the Mid-Atlantic region. This background document contains information on the process for permitting aquaculture projects, and the potential impacts of aquaculture on marine fish species and their habitats. In addition, staff developed a draft MAFMC Aquaculture Policy. As the interest in aquaculture activities grow in the Mid-Atlantic, it becomes more important that the MAFMC implement policies to ensure that aquaculture activities in the Mid-Atlantic are developed in a manner that is compatible with the protection of MAFMC-managed species and their habitats, and with commercial and recreational fishing activities. The purpose of this policy is to communicate the MAFMC perspective on sustainable marine aquaculture within the region.

When developing these documents, MAFMC staff used the existing aquaculture policy and aquaculture background documents developed by the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC). The “Aquaculture in the New England Region” background document involved collaborative efforts by staff from the NEFMC, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, MAFMC, and Northeast Fisheries Science Center. In addition, the NEFMC Aquaculture Policy was an exhaustive multi-year process with multiple Habitat Committee, Plan Development Team, and Habitat Advisory Panel meetings, culminating in the adoption of the policy by the NEFMC Council in December 2020.

At the May 10, 2022 meeting, the EOPC will review the drafts and make recommendations for any revisions and approval of the policy document. EOPC recommendations will then be presented to the Council at the June Council meeting.