

RIMFC Industrial Advisory Committee
7/21/15
Large Conference Room , URI Coastal Institute

Attendance:

Stephen Parente	Mike Rodrick*
Rich Fuka	Jerry Carvalho*
Katie Almeida	Ken Booth
Steven Anderson*	Christopher Rein (Chair)
Robert Mattiucci*	Bob Smith*
Eric Reid*	Mike McGiveney*
Jason McNamee (RIDFW)	Margret McGrath (RIDEM)
Robert Ballou (RIDEM)	John Lake (RIDFW)

The meeting began at 6PM and the required quorum was reached. The meeting began with the introduction of the new chair Christopher Rein. The agenda was presented next and BM requested that restricted finfish license endorsement opportunities be discussed prior to the shellfish endorsements. JL explained that 3 PEL restricted finfish and 3 multipurpose licenses were retired in 2014 that had some activity (>1 restricted finfish landing in last year) and that the current exit /entrance ratio of 1 new endorsement : 1 exiting license with activity would allow for 6 new restricted finfish license opportunities. BM made a motion to keep the exit/entrance ratio at 1:1 (status quo), the motion carried 7-0. **The IAC recommends 6 new restricted finfish license opportunities for 2016.**

Shellfish license endorsements were discussed next. JL indicated that under the current 2:1 exit/entry ratio of licenses retired eligible to harvest quahaugs a total of 18 new quahaug license endorsements would be available in 2016. MM proposed the exit/ entry ratio for quahaug endorsements be changed to 1:1 from 2:1. He stated that the RI shellfish association had discussed the matter and would like to see an increase in shell fishers to bring new blood into the industry and keep supply up. The resource is not overfished and could support the increase. MM made a motion to change the exit/entry ratio to 1:1 the motion carries 7-0. **The IAC recommends 32 new quahaug license opportunities for 2016.** Soft Shell clam endorsements were discussed next , JL indicated that under the current exit/entry ratio of 5:1 licenses retired eligible to harvest SS clams a total of 12 new SS clam license endorsements would be available in 2016. MM stated the shellfish association would support a 2:1 exit/entry ratio. GC made a motion to change the ratio to 1:1 stating that people should have the opportunity to buy a SS clam license and that the fishing effort would be governed by the availability of the resource. Currently the low stock status of SS clams would result in low effort. The motion passed 5-2. **The IAC recommends 51 new SS clam license opportunities for 2016.** Whelk endorsements were discussed next. JL indicated that currently whelk endorsements are only available to quahaug and SS clam endorsement holders. GC requested more data on the whelk fishery activity levels. MM stated no indication that whelk fishery needs any new changes. MM made a motion to keep

whelk exit/entry at status quo. Motion passes 6-1. **The IAC recommends that whelk endorsement remain only available to current quahaug and SS clam license holders.** Next there was discussion on the structure of the PEL and CFL shellfish licenses. GC stated that he wants the shellfish licenses simplified to a single shellfish license. MM indicated that his group felt similarly and that this discussion was mirrored in the statewide shellfish management plan initiative currently in progress. The current structure is not equitable to PEL/CFL license holders who pay more money than MPURP license holders for the same access to shell fishing. Additionally, the shellfish sector is now the only one has specific possession limits for the CFL license endorsements which do not meet the current needs of the fishery. JL indicated that RIDFW agrees and that they would like to get rid of the CFL license all together in a license restructure initiative.

The crustacean sector was discussed next, JL indicated that the current moratorium on new lobster licenses is still in effect from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) fishery management plan. JL indicated that trap transferability has been in place in RI for a year and that NOAA fisheries is allowing transfers for the 2016 fishing year. Trap reduction schedule starts May 1, 2016. **The IAC recommends no changes to the lobster license endorsement structure.**

Changes to the floating fish trap endorsement were discussed next. JL indicated that RIDFW is interested in altering the provisions of the endorsement in response to so discrepancies in the endorsement issuance process brought to light be a recent sale of a fish trap business. JL indicated that the current rules are not clear as to who may harvest and land fish caught in a fish trap and the intent of the regulations is to clarify the process. The proposed changes would also enhance RIDFW's data collection from the fishery and take the endorsement off of a three year cycle. GC stated that the system is fine as it is and RIDFW should not make the license system more complicated. Adding the new provisions will restrict floating fish trap fishers, these restrictions are not warranted merely so RIDFW can improve its data collection. He does not see the need for a fish trap endorsement at all. BB asked if there were any enforcement issues, JL indicated these changes come from RIDFW and is not aware of any enforcement issues. GC made a motion to not accept the changes to the fish trap endorsement, the motion fails 2-4-1. ER made a motion to accept the changes to the endorsement, the motion does not pass 3-3-1. JL indicated that RIDFW will likely not pursue the changes without the IAC consent and will wait until a broad license restructure to address the issue. **The IAC does not recommend the changes to the floating fish trap endorsement.**

The next item for consideration was alterations to the regulation concerning a sale of commercial fishing business (license/vessel/gear). Language was added to the regulation to clarify that the vessel involved in the sale must be the vessel used to satisfy the fishing activity requirement. GC stated he is opposed to the changes as it would further restrict fishermen from selling their businesses, he supports no changes. MMcG stated that in current system if the vessel involved in the sale is not the vessel with the fishing history it would be denied and the applicant would need to appeal the decision in the

RIDEM AAD process. The new language is clarifying what is already standard procedure. GC made a motion for no new changes to the sale of business regulation, the motion carried 5-0-2. **The IAC recommends no new changes to the regulation concerning sale of vessel and gear.**

Next a broader discussion took place concerning the RIDEM's desire to initiate a restructure of the commercial license system. BB and JL laid out the proposed timeline and process for the initiative. BM stated he sees no need for a restructure. MM stated that the shellfish licenses (PEL/CFL) need to be restructured and desires to see the CFL license done away with. The main issue is that a MPURP license is much cheaper than a PEL license that can harvest the same shellfish (\$300 MPURP/\$375 PEL), this is compounded by the fact that a MPURP could also participate in finfish and crustacean sectors at no extra cost and a PEL would pay an additional \$150 for full participation in each additional sector. A full PEL license costs \$525 compared to a \$300 MPURP. MR stated he agrees that the license need restructure citing that neighboring states are much easier to work in as far as landing of catch. JL stated that a license restructure would likely address that issue and that the idea for the new system could potentially shift some license provisions to vessels. BM made it very clear he opposes a vessel based license system. He asked why it keeps being proposed. JL stated that it has come up at RIMFC meetings and brought to the attention of RIDFW staff. Several other meeting participants echoed this. BB asked that the meeting participants formulate proposals as to what they would like to see come out of a new licensing system as well as any data requests. GC stated he would like some guidance from the RI general laws as to what can and cannot be done. BB indicated the next meeting would be in late September and would examine status and trends of the current license system. Without other business the meeting concluded.