



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mid-Atlantic Council to Hold Scoping Hearings for Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Amendment

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will hold four scoping hearings in February 2019 to solicit public input on an amendment to review and consider modifications to both the permitting system for *Illex* squid and the goals and objectives of the entire Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). There will also be a separate written comment period for this action which will be announced at a later date.

In June 2017, the Council considered, but did not adopt, revisions to *Illex* squid permits as part of Amendment 20 to the FMP. Since then, effort and landings have increased and the fishery closed early in both 2017 and 2018 after fully harvesting the available *Illex* squid quota. Given recent fishery performance, the Council is evaluating if permitted access to the *Illex* fishery should be modified based on recent and historical participation, and/or other considerations. In addition, existing FMP goals and objectives have not been revised since they were originally established. The Council is seeking input whether these goals and objectives are still appropriate for managing the Atlantic mackerel, squid, and butterfish fisheries or if they should be modified.

The scoping period is an important opportunity for members of the public to raise concerns related to the scope of issues that will be considered in the amendment and the general focus of the action. Public comments during scoping will help the Council address issues of public concern in a thorough and appropriate manner.

Hearing Schedule

1. **Monday, February 4, 2019, 6:00 pm**, Corless Auditorium, University of Rhode Island Bay Campus, 215 South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02882, 401-874-6440
2. **Tuesday, February 5, 2019, 5:30 pm**, Gurney's Inn, 290 Old Montauk Highway, Montauk, NY 11954, 631-668-2345
3. **Wednesday, February 6, 2019, 5:30 pm**, Congress Hall Hotel, 200 Congress Place, Cape May, NJ 08204, 609-884-8421
4. **Thursday, February 7, 2019, 6:00 pm**, Internet webinar: <http://mafmc.adobeconnect.com/msb-scoping-2019/>. A listening station will be available at the new Virginia Marine Resources Commission (380 Fenwick Road, Ft. Monroe, VA 23651, 757-247-2200). For assistance with the webinar, please call 302-397-1131.

Additional information and updates on this action will be posted on the Council's website at: <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment>.

Please direct any questions about the amendment to Jason Didden (jdidden@mafmc.org, 302- 526-5254).