

EEL WORKGROUP MEETING SUMMARY

December 6, 2016

Four workgroup members were present for the entire meeting, and two additional members came after the start.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to finalize industry goals and objectives and to review pros and cons of open access and limited entry systems.

Previously discussed goals and objectives included:

- Protect the highliners and dedicated seasonal eel fishers (don't lose middle of the summer)
- Some protection for bait harvesters
- Allow new entrants
- Fair and equitable; equitable may not mean everyone is equal
- Prolong harvest and the market through the year
- Consider the needs of the buyers
- Protect historic harvesters
- Reported harvest should be accountable/verifiable
 - Fear that bad data will lead to bad decisions

Based on workgroup member's discussion with other industry members, additional items include:

- Keep flexibility of access to harvest
- Prefer no ITQ
- No additional fees

A lot of time was spent discussing reporting and data issues including inconsistencies between dealer and harvester reports, inconsistencies between what's reported and what the market is, and potential approaches to monitoring progress towards quota. An additional meeting will be planned just to talk about these issues, and is likely to occur in late January.

The workgroup members prefer an open access fishery. It will allow new entrants, more flexibility, and probably won't force a change in reporting or illegal activity. However, trimester quota management may be necessary. If you allow everyone to fish on one big quota, the late season fishermen are likely to miss out. Would like the ability to change their minds if it doesn't work after the first year or two.

Limited entry tiered system presented leaves a higher likelihood of leaving quota on the table, would need to have flexibility to move. Should include harvesters from 2010-2015. Need some mechanism to enter the fishery. Having a limited entry permit would make a license more valuable and undermines the intent of an unlimited tidal fishing license.