



Mr. Thomas A. Nies
Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water St., Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

May 27, 2020

Dear Mr. Nies,

On behalf of the Scallopers Campaign, we want to update you on the efforts of limited access (LA) scallop vessel owners to encourage the Council to develop an LA leasing program in 2021.

We assembled our team last August to assist vessel owners in securing the flexibility they need to run their operations, principally by proposing a new leasing program within the LA fleet. This approach was brought before the Council last December as it was determining 2020 priorities. By that time, not only did a super majority of vessel owners support the Council moving forward with the development of a leasing program, but the Scallop Advisory Panel had voted twice – with overwhelming support – for prioritizing this initiative for 2020. While the proposal did not make it “above the line,” we were encouraged by the supportive remarks of several Council members, including the NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator, that the discussion on leasing should occur. We believe the remarks about the Council’s need to consider leasing in the LA scallop fleet were the result of the incredible support the proposal received across the industry.

Since that time, supporting LA vessel owners have become even more committed to the development of a leasing program that will provide them the operational flexibility they need. Consequently, support for the proposal has continued to grow within the fleet. With all the economic uncertainties now facing the industry, flexibility and resilience are needed more than ever. As the number of supporters continues to grow, we have formalized this effort into the “*Scallopers Campaign*.” We have developed a website (www.scalloperscampaign.org) to inform industry colleagues and the public about the Campaign’s purposes and activities. Additionally, we recently launched an industry survey for LA vessel owners, designed to collect information to inform the development of a leasing program. We plan to share the results with the Council after the fleet responds to the survey.

We are very sensitive to the turmoil and workload the COVID-19 pandemic has created for everyone within the industry and the fisheries management community. Our team will continue to participate in the Scallop AP and Committee meetings, and we will keep you informed on our efforts. We’ve attached an updated handout that demonstrates the current support for the development of a leasing program.

Best regards,

Jeffrey Pike

Rick Robins