



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference
209-2 Dawson Road
Columbia, SC 29223

RE: Proposed Rule to Lift the Northern Temporary Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning Closure for Bivalve Harvesting

NOAA Fisheries Service is proposing to lift the Northern Temporary Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) Closure for bivalve harvesting. We are taking this action at the request of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) based on the premise that the area has not been subject to a toxic algal bloom for several years and testing of bivalve shellfish has demonstrated toxin levels well below those known to cause human illness. In addition, the FDA has developed an agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) to conduct PSP monitoring of bivalves from the area in accordance with specified testing procedures. If we lift the closure, DMF will test the reopened waters and if the results yield samples that exceed the threshold for public safety, DMF would notify us, and we would work with the FDA to reinstate the closure.

Please note that this regulatory action would leave the area closed to the harvest of whole/roe-on scallops and gastropods.

A copy of the Federal Register notice is attached for your review, along with a copy of the letter from DMF to the FDA regarding the monitoring program. The comment period for this proposed rule ends on July 22, 2014. If you have any questions regarding this action, please contact Jason Berthiaume, Fishery Management Specialist, at 978-281-9177 or Jason.Berthiaume@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

JUL 11 2014

