

**FTS-DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**Moderator: Laurel Bryant**  
**April 9, 2010**  
**1:30 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. All participants will be in listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session of today's conference. As a reminder, the conference call is being recorded. If you have any objections please disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the call over to our first speaker, Ms. Laurel Bryant. Ma'am, you may begin.

Laurel Bryant: Okay. Thanks, operator.

Hello, folks. Welcome to NOAA Fisheries' final stakeholder teleconference, on the Draft Catch Shares Policy. I'm Laurel Bryant. I'm the Fisheries program manager for NOAA External Affairs.

And the purpose of today's teleconference is really to be able to provide you a brief summary overview of comments received and how the process has gone. And more importantly, to be able to answer any last minute questions, because there's certainly comments that are still coming in. The comment period has been open since December 10, and it will be open until tomorrow, Saturday, April 10.

With me here in the room is Dr. Mark Holliday, director of policy for NOAA Fisheries, and also executive director of the Catch Share Task Force.

And hopefully, joining us on the phone will be Monica Medina. Monica is multitasking today, and was not going to be able to make it in to us. And so we're waiting for her to be able to phone in. Monica, as you know, is Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary of NOAA, and has been serving as the Catch Share Task Force policy chair in this effort.

On the phone today I just wanted to remind folks that unlike the other phone calls where we did very sector-specific phone calls, today you are on line more with the national constituency representation. We have all of our stakeholders on, able to call in. And with that, I want to make certain that we have enough time for questions from everybody, focus more in on questions, rather than soliciting comment.

I'll just back up -- before I turn it over to Mark -- that when we do go over to Q&A, I'd like to make certain that you state your name and your affiliation for the courtesy of the others on the phone. And the transcript and the audio recording of this will be available. We'll probably be able to get that posted some time early next week. And you're always able to ask me any questions or reach me online, at [laurel.bryant@noaa.gov](mailto:laurel.bryant@noaa.gov).

And with that, I'm going to turn it over Dr. Holliday. Mark?

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thanks, Laurel, and thank you, everybody on the phone who's joined us this afternoon.

I wanted to provide some feedback on what we've been hearing so far, relative to the Draft Catch Shares Policy. As you know, NOAA posted the policy for public comment back in December and we wanted to allow four months of time for people to review the policy, ask questions, really get into the content

of the policy and what NOAA's intent was and what your feedback was, what your comments were, in order to help improve the content of the policy.

So in soliciting this feedback over the last few months, we've received slightly more than 4000 comments that have come in via email, via the web, and through regular mail and letters.

However, about 80% -- 8 out of 10 of those comments that have come in -- have been in the form of a form letter, which has either expressed support or opposition in principle to Catch Shares, with no particular reference to the content of the draft policy.

So the comment period, itself, really was trying to get to the heart of what NOAA was proposing to do in advancing the consideration of Catch Shares programs, wasn't intended to be a referendum or a vote for or against Catch Shares. But it's clear that there is strong interest in the subject itself, based on the nature of the comments and those of you who've taken the opportunity to look at comments that have been posted on the web can see for yourself...

Woman: Monica just joined us.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Oh, okay.

Hello, Monica. We're going to try to get you patched into the call. We see you've just joined us and I was just beginning with our opening remarks.

Monica Medina: Okay and I'll jump in at the end.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thanks.

So I just wanted to, you know, reiterate that we have a large number of comments, but many of them were of a form letter in nature and it's really not terribly revealing to do, you know, counts of -- numbers of those who are in favor of them or those who are against it.

So I'm going to try to share with you, you know, some of the high-level summary information about what people have been saying, just as some feedback on what we've been hearing, about what people are saying.

Going through the comments so far, we've seen that the most common reason cited for Catch Shares support focuses on the potential for Catch Shares to contribute to the long-term sustainability of fishery. It's been seen as a good option, both environmentally and economically. It combines the positive aspects of a firm annual catch limit, but without the negative aspects of the race to fish.

On the other side of the coin, of the emails, web posts, and letters that have expressed opposition to the use of Catch Shares in fisheries, one of the most common reasons cited was their concern that Catch Shares programs were a form of privatization of public resources. And this concern was expressed throughout.

Some of the other comments, in general, in favor of Catch Shares, specifically noted, the capacity for Catch Shares programs to increase, a more locally based, self-governing fishing industry, the ability to support consumer preferences for sustainably caught seafoods, specifically, fish harvested through our Catch Shares program.

And on the other side of the coin, other comments against Catch Shares, urged NOAA not to require use of Catch Shares for particular sectors, or

recreational fishing in particular. And we should note that the draft policy itself does not require the use of Catch Shares in any particular fishery or sector.

Comments also mentioned the concerns about Catch Shares and the consolidation of the fishery, job loss, and the negative impact from small scale fishermen, as concerns as a part of the implementation of Catch Shares programs.

Many of the comments that we received came in from fishermen who are actively engaged in fisheries where Catch Shares are being used, whether in an ITQ program or a cooperative program. And again, comments ran on both sides of the issue, both pro and con.

I'll just run through some of the comments, because I think they are illustrative of some of the types of concerns and issues that people were reacting to.

We heard from commercial fisherman from the Rhode Island State ITQ program, who made note of the tougher parts of his program, such as increased monitoring, paying for observers, reducing bycatch where indeed changes from the status quo. But it worked in their favor, and he said, "I think we all felt fishing was enjoyable again. I'm for Catch Shares."

Another Rhode Island wrote that the program reduced bycatch and discard, and allowed the fishermen to plan their businesses and adapt more easily.

On the other side of the coin, a fisherman from Kodiak in the Alaska Halibut IFQ program, wrote that the fishery and communities experienced job losses, and shareowners now lease a majority of their shares without fishing them.

Another fisherman in that same fishery wrote that, "Quota shares were bought up by a few, and crew jobs were lost forever."

Again, going through just to give you a sense of some of the range of comments here -- from another Alaskan fisherman has stated that he started out as a crew member, and he wrote about working his way into the Halibut sablefish and crab fisheries, and how just like any other business, it requires hard work, some risk, and investing capital. So for him the loan programs were helpful and the Alaska fisheries could be modeled for other Catch Shares programs around the nation.

Another example from somebody -- a fisherman who is currently working in the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery -- this commercial fisherman noted that the program was a success in his eyes, and that after implementation of the Catch Shares for the commercial sector, they're able to raise both the ACL, the annual catch limits for the recreational and the charter sectors, in addition to the commercial sectors as a result of improved sustainability of the fishery.

From that same fishery though, another fisherman, in the IFQ for red snapper said that he has a major concern over leasing. And he pointed out there was strong concerns over absentee owners and larger privilege holders leasing their shares, increasing the cost for other snapper fishermen.

And then finally a comment came from someone in another fisherman, this time from a participant in the upcoming New England sector program, who voiced concern that the larger boats during the allocation process received larger allocations, and that Catch Shares programs, based on his experience, rewarded those who are fishing during historical catch periods when stocks were stressed, and did not reward people who stopped fishing voluntarily for

conservation purposes during those historical time periods used to make those allocations.

So again, we're getting, you know, different views, different perspectives, of people who have on-the-ground experience with Catch Shares programs to date, and a part of the objective of the Catch Shares policy is to learn from these lessons, take the best parts of what's been successful, learn from those parts of programs that haven't been as successful as desired, and provide some guidance and instructions for those who want to consider Catch Shares as an option in the future.

There was one issue that just about all commenters who mentioned it, you know, could agree on, and that is that the quality and the quantity of the fishery science needs to be improved before trying to implement a fishery management program; and that one of the most important aspects of the Catch Shares program is going to rely on this type of monitoring.

It's been noted, though, that with the increase in improved monitoring that comes with Catch Shares, in the form of dockside observers or at sea observers or improved monitoring programs, they benefit both Catch Shares programs and non-Catch Shares programs, but all these data and observation systems actually improve the quality of the data that go into stock assessments, that go into the economic impact analyses, and go into the monitoring of the success or the failure of the plan in the future. But the key is to try to make sure that we make a sufficient investment in the science before, during, and after program implementation for fisheries management, in order to ensure the greatest success.

So I'll just wind up with a few, you know, summary conclusions before we open up the phone for Monica to give her remarks to everyone, and then go on to the questions and answers.

But indeed, you know, Catch Shares from the outset, from the very beginning of the creation of the task force last June, through the draft policy issuance in December and on until today, NOAA has said that Catch Shares are not for every fishery. There's no requirement mandate or quotas demanding that they be used in any particular sector or fishery. And it's also a recognition that there's no single perfect management tool. However, NOAA is encouraging the council to look at recent Catch Shares provisions in the reauthorized Magnuson Act from 2007, and see if there is a good fit for the specific fisheries, goals, and objectives the councils are facing in their region.

You know, NOAA has drafted this policy to take all of these experiences and lessons learned over the last 20 years with Catch Shares to help councils and their stakeholders to consider whether or not Catch Shares, (or some) option for management is best. The policy allows a great deal of discretion and flexibility within the subject of the constraints of the Magnuson Act of course, so that the programs can be designed in the best possible way for that area and for that fishery.

Sort of the last point here is what's next. What's coming up after the close of the comment period. We will be carefully assessing all of the comments over the coming months, and we will pay particular attention to the comments that suggested where the policy needed change, both in its content or the type of advice provided, and we'll revise the draft policy to provide the best possible guidance and direction on the potential use of Catch Shares options as one approach to fisheries management.

And as Laurel started out, as a reminder, we are accepting comments on the draft policy through tomorrow, and we'd be pleased to answer later during the session any remaining questions you may have on the draft policy before you submit your comments. And we'll remind you at the end of the call where to send those comments, but I'll mention it once at the start, just for your information. You can send them by email, to [catchshares@noaa.gov](mailto:catchshares@noaa.gov); one word, [catchshares@noaa.gov](mailto:catchshares@noaa.gov). Or if you go to the NMFS home page at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/catchshares](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/catchshares), it'll take you directly to the comment page.

So again, my job this afternoon was to just provide some context on what we've heard so far from what people are saying, and I'd like to turn the floor over to Monica Medina at this point, and have her talk to you about the NOAA perspective on our process and where we stand right now.

Monica Medina: Thanks, Mark. That was a great summary and a great way to start the call.

I don't have a whole lot to add, other than that Dr. Lubchenco is very interested in this, and very much will, you know, be helping us as we shape the policy at the end; that I think it will benefit -- we will benefit from all of the comments, both the criticisms and the favorable ones. I think it's been a very helpful process for those of us trying to craft the policy and we are glad and grateful for all the public input.

I also think it's been helpful, actually, to try and draft the policy while also trying to implement Catch Shares in a few places. But it helps to frame or to focus us on particular issues with implementation as we draft the policy so that we're mindful of the impact of some of the words in a real and specific way. We're applying it and learning from that, and hopefully that will help to make the policy even better.

Our goal is for this to be a very durable policy, to be one that really can help to guide the use of Catch Shares for fisheries in the future and in that way be a useful thing to both councils and the fishermen. And I think I'm really looking forward to doing even more implementation. And I'm hopeful that we can conclude our drafting pretty quickly after having reviewed all the comments. I think we've been paying attention all along as they come in, and hopefully we'll be able to turn this around quickly.

And I would echo what Mark said about any additional comments, we're glad to get them. So we look forward to any that people want to submit now in the last hours of our comment period.

And I want to end by thanking the NOAA team for all their hard work on this. And with that we look forward to your questions and comments.

Laurel Bryant: Great.

Operator, could you instruct our participants on how to get in the queue for question-and-answer?

Coordinator: Thank you.

At this time, we are ready for the question-and-answer session. If you'd like to ask a question, please press star, 1. To withdraw your question, press star, 2. One moment.

Laurel Bryant: You guys are acting shy.

(Unintelligible) break...

Coordinator: Our first question, Greg DiDomenico, with Garden State Seafood Association.  
Your line is open.

Greg DiDomenico: (Unintelligible) very much. I'll try to be as brief as possible and to the point with my questions.

The draft Catch Shares policy has a short list of characteristics that could be exhibited by a fishery and where if these characteristics are exhibited in a fishery Catch Shares could be particularly beneficial to implementation in those fishers. You have a short list, whether or not the fishery is over capitalized, are the stakeholders receptive, are the stocks overfished, this issue of infrastructure and whether a fishery can be jointly monitored or jointly managed with another fishery that exists, you know, in the same time and place, and then whether or not there's a bycatch issue.

And I was wondering if a fishery does not exhibit those particular characteristics, is the agency going to go ahead with Catch Shares in the particular fishery, again, that does not exhibit those characteristics?

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thanks, Greg.

I appreciate the question, and let me follow up by going right back to the policy where you reference those characteristics. It says that, you know, there's no requirement that, you know, any of these characteristics would be there or not there. And if, in fact, it's up to the council, the regional council to determine ultimately the appropriateness of a Catch Shares program for their particular fishery.

So the policy view is that we were asked to, by the task force to identify particular characteristics of fisheries where Catch Shares had been used in the

past, but that's not the only criteria that one would be using to make this determination. Ultimately, the stakeholders and the council together will figure out, will Catch Shares be an improvement over the status quo management. Will Catch Shares be an improvement over some alternative fishery management.

What we were trying to do in the policy was to go through the literature and the experience people have had to date and say, you know, for the council to consider a Catch Shares, what type of milestone or what types of characteristics might they be looking for that would help them make those types of determinations.

So there's no single, you know, right or wrong set of criteria. There's not absolute list. It's left to the discretion of the council under the Magnuson Act to determine where these types of programs make a fit, because each council's goals and objectives, and circumstances are going to differ. There is no one size that will fit all different fishery circumstances.

Greg DiDomenico: Will there be another opportunity to ask additional questions?

Dr. Mark Holliday: I believe so. I think yes...

Woman: Absolutely.

Dr. Mark Holliday: We have the line open until 4 o'clock. So I think we'll be able to circle back and take a second round of questions from everybody.

Greg DiDomenico: Thank you, Mark.

Coordinator: Our next question, (Matt Joslet), with (Brickyard Fishing). Your line is open.

(Matt Joslet): Yes. Hello, everybody.

Really glad to hear about the (sort of) program today -- I just learned about it today, and I briefed over the paper before listening on this phone call. I'm in the Gulf of Mexico. I'm a grouper fisherman. I'm a part of the grouper IFQ fishery. I think it's probably one of the best things that's happened in our fishery since I've been involved in it.

But I am having an issue now. I've raised fairly large amount of capital with my group IFQs, and I am going to financial institutions to try and procure more funds so I could continue to keep a clean fishery by leasing snapper shares or buying red snapper shares.

I am having a problem with the validity of the Catch Shares to the financial institutions that are in front of me. I've been to three various different financial institutions and I was reading about the registering and how we could file (liens) (loans) all that. So I was just voicing my support to keep moving in that direction. That's all really I had to say.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thanks, (Matt), for that observation.

You know, the idea of financing for Catch Shares where there's a purchase of lease of shares, there are provisions in the Magnuson Act under Catch Shares that make available to the individual programs of different councils, access to the NMFS fisheries finance program also as a source of capital. And these are loans that are issued at two points above federal loan rates. They're 25 years in duration. And there are provisions for regional council to request the secretary to set up these types of loan programs for the qualifying program.

So there is quite a bit of difference among the different coasts with the financial institutions' familiarity with Catch Shares programs and how they can use them in making loans. But, you know, we have been doing so with the Halibut and sablefish fisheries IFQ, the individual fishing quota program in Alaska. For a number of years now through the NMFS program, and that opportunity is open to other regional council, so you want to set up those programs as well, and the details of how to do that are right in the statute itself. So...

(Matt Joslet): I'll have to do a little more research into that because I thought there was only two fisheries from what I gather today that were approved, but I'll do more research on it, and I appreciate the information.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Right. I'd be more than happy to walk you through that. I think at the June Gulf council meeting, we're also going to be trying to make a presentation on these NMFS fisheries finance programs and the steps the Gulf council would have to take to set up a program for the IFQ programs for red snapper and grouper in the Gulf.

So if you'd like to contact me, my email address -- I'll give it to you right now -- it's mark.holliday@noaa.gov.

(Matt Joslet): Okay.

(Unintelligible). Okay, I'll...

Dr. Mark Holliday: You can just send me your contact and I'll give you a call or we can do it by email. Whatever you like.

(Matt Joslet): Okay, that sounds good. I appreciate your time and keep up the good work guys.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thank you.

Laurel Bryant: Do we have any other questions?

Coordinator: Once again, if you'd like to ask a question, please press star, 1.

Laurel Bryant: (Unintelligible) people on the line.

Greg, do you want to ask the second part of your question?

Greg DiDomenico: (Unintelligible) held several Catch Shares presentations over the last year. During one of these presentations one of the staff said that, "32 additional programs will begin development in fiscal year 2012." Does the agency have a particular list of 32 fisheries, where they want to see Catch Shares, and if so, could they please share that list with the industry?

Dr. Mark Holliday: Sure, Greg.

So I want to make sure this comes out clearly, because, you know, there has been some confusion what that list represents, and what the number is and, you know, different time frames.

So we have worked with each of the eight regional fishery management councils over the last 12 months. We meet with them as a group, about two or three times a year, with our regional administrators, in each of our regions. And we discuss what their plans are currently, which means, you know, in the

next 12 months. And for the future what do they anticipate as their workload and the kinds of actions that they're going to be taking.

And then so it's from those discussions that we jointly identified, you know -- and again, the list has changed because each time we ask we get different answers relative to the priorities and the different responses from the different councils. But it's about three dozen different potential fisheries across the country that may -- again this is the important part -- that may be subject to a council of consideration of a Catch Shares program at some time in the future. It's not wedded to a specific date, not wedded to a specific, you know, number in any particular council.

There's sort of no obligation, but I wanted to make clear that the purpose here was to identify the possible scale that we could be preparing for if councils were going to be moving forward on this. So they're under no obligation continue to develop it beyond the scoping stage of maybe we want to consider it and maybe we don't .

Right now, you know, there's only a hand full of programs that are actively being, you know, worked on from New England sector program that takes effect in May of this year, to the ground fish program on the Pacific Coast, which is scheduled to take place on January 1 of next year.

And the list is public information. What I think we ought to do is post it on our Web site. We responded to our Congressional members on the Hill. We sent it in various letters. To avoid any further confusion, I think we should just put it up on our web page, and I think we'll do that next week, as well as an explanation of, it's not a target; it's not a, you know, requirement; there's no obligation on anybody's part to carry through with it. It was really one of trying to get a handle on future and scale and scope of where Catch Shares

interest with the councils lie so that we could better prepare our planning and capacity support to help the councils who wanted to move forward with that.

So does that clarify what the purpose and what the meaning was for you?

Greg DiDomenico: Say that again, Mark?

Dr. Mark Holliday: I was hoping that helped clarify where that number and what it really meant was.

Greg DiDomenico: Yes it did. Thank you.

Monica Medina: Yes, Mark, this is Monica.

I just want to jump and say I do think we ought to put the list on the Web site because I think we even talked about specific ones on some of the other calls that we've had, the stakeholder calls.

I also want to say when Mark talks about the, you know, kind of planning, we are already very far down the road on our fiscal year '12 budget process. So really this helps us to go and say this is how much funding we'll need in order to be able to implement Catch Shares well everywhere. So being able to quantify just even the possible number of Catch Shares programs gives us a chance to then go and get the resources we need from OMB and Congress.

So we do have to -- you know, we aren't...It's not just a sort of academic planning exercise. There is a real impact on us and we want to be able to go after that funding, because we think we'll need it.

Greg DiDomenico: Thank you.

Laurel Bryant: Operator, our next questioner?

Coordinator: Jeff Kaelin, with Lundgren's Fisheries Inc. Your line is open.

Jeff Kaelin: Yes, thanks. Jeff Kaelin. I was on mute when I was told to state my name.

Mark and Laurel, (Tonya) and Monica, thank you for taking the time to do this. It's been an interesting process to watch (this) since last winter. And the specific question I was going to ask was the one that Greg asked, because the presentations have changed. I think to you credit, they've changed in response to what you're hearing.

While you're setting your budget, I think, you know, this is not (pertinent) to the call, but the potential impacts on Catch Shares funding in the 2011 budget in terms of cooperative researchers of very large concern, as is insufficient assessment money. And the opportunity to build with our knowledge of assessments, which are going to be very important to Catch Shares by using industry ideas and platforms, and hopefully we can move in that direction.

So you've explained the 32 fisheries, which we would like to see at some point, and you said you're going to put it on the Web site. So I guess I'll, at this point, let you know we do file -- we will file comments. I assume it's, what 5 o'clock tomorrow. Is it 12:01, Saturday? Or what's the time?

Dr. Mark Holliday: Well I think officially, you know, Saturday ends at midnight (or) evening.

Jeff Kaelin: Okay.

Dr. Mark Holliday: So if it's postmarked or in the email dated by that time, we're happy to consider them. And it's Saturday at the very end of the day before anybody is up to go fishing Sunday morning.

Jeff Kaelin: Well you won't be surprised to hear we've been working on comments for some time and just waiting to get them out and finalize them.

So thanks for the process, and Mark, in particular, your being at the Mid-Atlantic Catch Shares workshop, which was a real good opportunity to look at the pros and cons. So I'll leave it at that. I don't have any further questions. Thank you.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thanks, Jeff, for your kind words.

Coordinator: Once again, if you'd like to ask a question, please press star, 1. One moment.

There are no further questions...Oh I apologize. One moment.

Greg DiDomenico, your line is open.

Greg DiDomenico: How will the agency consider short side investment in the draft Catch Shares policy, and let me just explain a little bit. In some of these pelagic fisheries where shore side development and shore side employment and investment has played a huge role in kind of developing a market for certain fisheries. How will the agency in a draft Catch Shares policy consider shore side investment and shore side entities?

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thanks, Greg.

So, you know, I want to start again with, you know, going back to the council process, because I think that's, well this isn't the NOAA policy; that, you know, trying to facilitate the consideration of Catch Shares as an option, it comes back down to each individual council and how they develop their program.

Having said that, when we go back to the Magnuson Act, and we look at the requirements that they set out for consideration of, not just the commercial and recreational fishermen, but the processors, the other fishery dependent industries in a port that are going to be affected by a fishery management program. I think the policy is quite clear that all of these different features and all these different characteristics need to be on the table as the council develops, both the goals and objectives, and the actual program design of a Catch Shares program.

So you example, you know, I was stating that, you know, in many cases the shore side component is responsible for the development of a fishery. They have a history of actually creating the markets and creating this (unintelligible) and for the product that fishermen are taking. And those factors need to be considered in how allocations are made. It should be considered in the distribution and transfer rules that the councils come up with.

So when you look at what the requirements of the Act are, and consider the traditional roles of participation of these various groups, it's not limited to just the harvesters. It's including all those different fishery dependent components of the fishing industry that need to be a part of the Catch Shares plan. And that's spelled out directly in the statute, and that is reiterated in the draft policy itself. I think it's a very important component to the success of the plan.

Greg DiDomenico: Thank you, Mark. It's much more, I guess, comforting to hear it from a person instead of the black and white, either (in) Magnuson or Catch Shares policy. So thank you very much.

Dr. Mark Holliday: And it's something that we, you know, Greg, if we need to emphasize it or say it with different clarity or different words, that's certainly fair game for you to, you know, suggest a better means to do that than we've done it in the draft policy. That's a part of why we're asking for feedback.

Greg DiDomenico: Will do.

Coordinator: Our next question...I apologize.

Once again, if you'd like to ask a question, please press star, 1. One moment.

Laurel Bryant: Well folks, it doesn't look like we've got any further questions.

Monica, would you like to say some closing remarks?

(Unintelligible)

Do you want to say anything?

Dr. Mark Holliday: If there are no further questions, but you think of something that you'd like to get some feedback on before the end of the day, you all heard my email address. But I would appreciate -- I appreciate everyone taking the time to spend a few minutes with us this afternoon to listen to our remarks. And I encourage...

((Crosstalk))

Monica Medina: Hello, Mark? It's Monica. Sorry, I had my phone on mute. (And I just) realized it. I just didn't want background noise, because I wanted to be able to hear.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Yes.

Monica Medina: Anyway, so I just wanted to say the same things. Thank you.

I wanted to thank, you Mark, and the whole NMFS team on this. I wanted to thank Laurel on the Public Affairs team.

You know, it is very helpful from my perspective in the role I play, to have, you know, the support that you all provide. We are very glad to be, I think near the end of the process and excited about finishing it, finishing the policy, and really grateful the public, more than anything else, for coming through and giving us so many comments, such rich and helpful feedback.

So I didn't mean to interrupt, but I finally got my phone off mute. So, thanks.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thank you, Monica.

Laurel Bryant: Thanks, Monica.

Dr. Mark Holliday: And certainly we appreciate you leadership and commitment to see this through as well.

Monica Medina: Well that's the easy part. You guys have done all the hard work and, you know, I hope that everyone will see it when we're all done that people will

appreciate how much work went into this and that we really do have a durable policy that can help fishing communities and the councils.

So thank you, all.

Dr. Mark Holliday: And I'll just steal a phrase from our brethren at the U.S. Census Bureau on say, you know, the process isn't finished until you've submitted your comment. So if you haven't yet sent in a comment to [catchshares@noaa.gov](mailto:catchshares@noaa.gov), or gone to our Web site at the NMFS home page, slash catchshares, please consider doing so, because we really do want your feedback and we know that there are improvements that can be made in the draft policy and it can only happen if you participate and share your ideas with us.

So thanks for your time this afternoon and...

Laurel Bryant: And with that I've got one last comment I want to make.

So I've got some of your emails, but I don't have all of them, and have been trying to assist Mark, making certain that we push out information (on). Please feel free to send me your email. I'm, again, at [laurel.bryant@noaa.gov](mailto:laurel.bryant@noaa.gov), regards to copies of transcripts, things that are to be posted or things that you want posted and aren't. Please feel free to contact me at any time, and we'll get you the information you're looking for.

And with that, I want to say thanks everybody. And we look forward to continue the dialogue.

Dr. Mark Holliday: Thanks, everybody. Take care.

Laurel Bryant: Good bye, everybody.

Coordinator: Thank you. That concludes today's conference call. All lines...

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