



# MID-ATLANTIC

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FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Council Discontinues Development of Squid Buffer Framework**

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council voted last week to discontinue development of a framework action that would have considered establishing a squid fishery buffer zone in waters south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. This decision will allow the effects of the recently-approved Squid Amendment to be realized prior to any additional action.

The Council included the Squid Buffer Framework in its list of possible actions for 2017 in response to public concern regarding longfin squid fishing effort during Trimester 2 (May-August) in an area south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Commenters raised concerns about a lack of juvenile squid in some areas, high amounts of bycatch of squid eggs and other species, and reported poor recreational finfish catches.

The Squid Amendment includes a 250-pound trip limit for all permits once the Trimester 2 quota has been reached — a 90% reduction from the current post-closure trip limit of 2,500 pounds. Once the amendment is implemented by NOAA Fisheries, fishing effort will be constrained after a closure during the summer months. This may address some of the concerns raised regarding squid fishing near Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Allowing time for that action to be fully implemented will enable the Council to evaluate the need for buffers or other management measures more effectively in the future.

Prior to last week's meeting in Annapolis, Maryland, the Council received a substantial number of public comments both in support of and opposed to the framework. Comments immediately prior to the meeting were mostly against proceeding with the buffer action. Also, the directors of the state fisheries agencies for Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the two states most directly impacted, recommended not moving forward with the action at this time.

After extensive discussion and consideration of public comments, the Council voted to discontinue development of the framework. In December 2018 the Council will consider if a 2019 workshop including the various interested parties could serve to further inform possible future actions.