§ 648.25 Atlantic Mackerel, squid, and butterfish framework adjustments to management measures.

(a) Within season management action. The MAFMC may, at any time, initiate action to add or adjust management measures within the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP if it finds that action is necessary to meet or be consistent with the goals and objectives of the FMP.

(1) Adjustment process. The MAFMC shall develop and analyze appropriate management actions over the span of at least two MAFMC meetings. The MAFMC must provide the public with
advance notice of the availability of the recommendation(s), appropriate justification(s) and economic and biological analyses, and the opportunity to comment on the proposed adjustment(s) at the first meeting and prior to and at the second MAFMC meeting. The MAFMC’s recommendations on adjustments or additions to management measures must come from one or more of the following categories: Adjustments within existing ABC control rule levels; adjustments to the existing MAFMC risk policy; introduction of new AMs, including sub-ACTs; minimum fish size; maximum fish size; gear restrictions; gear requirements or prohibitions; permitting restrictions, recreational possession limit; recreational seasons; closed areas; commercial seasons; commercial trip limits; commercial quota system, including commercial quota allocation procedure and possible quota set-asides to mitigate bycatch; recreational harvest limit; annual specification quota setting process; FMP Monitoring Committee composition and process; description and identification of EFH (and fishing gear management measures that impact EFH); description and identification of habitat areas of particular concern; overfishing definition and related thresholds and targets; regional gear restrictions; regional season restrictions (including option to split seasons); restrictions on vessel size (LOA and GRT) or shaft horsepower; any other management measures currently included in the FMP, set aside quota for scientific research, regional management; process for inseason adjustment to the annual specification; mortality caps for river herring and shad species; time/area management for river herring and shad species; and provisions for river herring and shad incidental catch avoidance program, including adjustments to the mechanism and process for tracking fleet activity, reporting incidental catch events, compiling data, and notifying the fleet of changes to the area(s); the definition/duration of ‘test tows,’ if test tows would be utilized to determine the extent of river herring incidental catch in a particular area(s); the threshold for river herring incidental catch that would trigger the need for vessels to be alerted and move out of the area(s); the distance that vessels would be required to move from the area(s); and the time that vessels would be required to remain out of the area(s). Measures contained within this list that require significant departures from previously contemplated measures or that are otherwise introducing new concepts may require amendment of the FMP instead of a framework adjustment.

(2) MAFMC recommendation. After developing management actions and receiving public testimony, the MAFMC shall make a recommendation to the Regional Administrator. The MAFMC’s recommendation must include supporting rationale, if management measures are recommended, an analysis of impacts, and a recommendation to the Regional Administrator on whether to issue the management measures as a final rule. If the MAFMC recommends that the management measures should be issued as a final rule, the MAFMC must consider at least the following factors, and provide support and analysis for each factor considered:

(i) Whether the availability of data on which the recommended management measures are based allows for adequate time to publish a proposed rule, and whether the regulations would have to be in place for an entire harvest/fishing season.

(ii) Whether there has been adequate notice and opportunity for participation by the public and members of the affected industry in the development of the recommended management measures.

(iii) Whether there is an immediate need to protect the resource.

(iv) Whether there will be a continuing evaluation of management measures following their implementation as a final rule.

(3) NMFS action. If the MAFMC’s recommendation includes adjustments or additions to management measures and, after reviewing the MAFMC’s recommendation and supporting information:

(i) If NMFS concurs with the MAFMC’s recommended management measures and determines that the recommended management measures
should be issued as a final rule based on the factors specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, the measures will be issued as a final rule in the \textit{Federal Register}.

(ii) If NMFS concurs with the MAPMC’s recommended management measures and determines that the recommended management measures should be published first as a proposed rule, the measures will be published as a proposed rule in the \textit{Federal Register}. After additional public comment, if NMFS concurs with the MAPMC recommendation, the measures will be issued as a final rule in the \textit{Federal Register}.

(iii) If NMFS does not concur, the MAPMC will be notified in writing of the reasons for the non-concurrence.

(4) \textit{Emergency actions}. Nothing in this section is meant to derogate from the authority of the Secretary to take emergency action under section 305(e) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

(b) [Reserved]