

November 14, 2011

To New England's Senators and Congressmen,

We write to you as active commercial fishermen in New England to express our views on the ongoing transition in our fishery and on the efforts of elected officials to provide assistance. Much has been said and written over the last few years about the development and implementation of a new management system in the groundfish fishery on which all of our small businesses depend. But several crucial facts have been largely ignored in this public dialogue:

- In 2010, our fishery faced mandated harvest reductions on several key stocks in order to meet rebuilding goals and comply with the provisions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act. These reductions were required regardless of what management system was in place at the time.
- While some individual businesses have unfortunately experienced hardship, there was no management alternative that could have avoided this. In fact, the alternative, which remains available to the entire fishery, is the so-called common pool (a 50% reduction in DAS with impossibly low trip limits) and has proven so unpopular it now accounts for less than one percent of the fishery.

A few voices calling for the overturn of the entire Sector system have been amplified in the media, and we understand that our elected officials are trying to respond to their constituents' concerns. Unfortunately, this has led to a series of increasingly dangerous proposals that truly put the future of our businesses and fisheries at risk. Perhaps too many of us in the industry have been too busy making the new system work to consistently weigh in. This letter is our attempt to rectify that situation.

We believe that, rather than rhetoric, our fishery needs New England's elected leaders to promote stability, profitability and flexibility. To do this, we ask you to support:

- Management stability rather than the chaos of a return to the failed days-at-sea program.
- Increased opportunities to target robust stocks and reduced operational costs of management.
- Funding for improving and increasing the frequency of stock assessments to support effective management.

Our jobs and businesses depend on your response. Our fishery continues to face many challenges and is still struggling to deal with some of the problems caused by the days-at-sea system and inadequate management infrastructure. We ask you to please work with us and with those associations that represent us to address these issues and move forward.

Thank you for your continued support and leadership.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Akerly
F/V Explorer II, Gloucester MA

Carlos Alberto
F/V Luso American I, New Bedford MA

Terry Alexander
F/V Jocka, Boston, MA
F/V Rachel T, Portland, ME

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F/V Kaos, Nantucket MA

Stephen Arnold
F/V Elizabeth Helen, Point Judith RI

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F/V North Star, Portland ME

Wade Behlman
F/V Jennifer Dan, Cotuit MA

Steve Benner
F/V High Roller, Port Clyde ME

Mark Bichrest
F/V Jennifer & Emily, Gloucester MA

Troy Bichrest
F/V Pamela Grace, Cundy's Harbor ME

Wallace Bicknell
F/V Miss Melodye, Chatham MA

William Borges
F/V Holly Jean, New Bedford MA

Carl Bouchard
F/V Stormy Weather, Hampton NH

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F/V America, Boston MA
F/V American Pride, Boston MA

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F/V Peggy B II, Harwich MA

Christopher Brown
F/V Proud Mary, Point Judith RI

Antonio Caniera
F/V Sunshine, New Bedford MA

Matthew Carter
F/V Angela Michelle, Gloucester MA

Chris Chadwick
F/V Native Son, Rowley MA

Daniel Connors
F/V Early Time, Newburyport MA

Gregory Connors
F/V Constance Sea, Chatham MA

Al Cottone
F/V Sabrina Maria, Gloucester MA

Gerry Cushman
F/V Bug Catcher, Port Clyde ME

Randy Cushman
F/V Ella Christine, Port Clyde ME

Guiseppe Dimaio
F/V Princess Laura, Gloucester MA

Charles Dodge
F/V Edward and Joseph, Chatham MA
F/V Strangle Hold, Chatham MA
F/V Lady Irene, Chatham MA

Robert Dougherty and Ken Ketchum
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James Eldredge
F/V Yellow Bird, Chatham MA

Kenneth Eldredge
F/V Lolo, Chatham MA

Robert Eldridge
F/V Unicorn, Chatham MA

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F/V Sofia, Chatham MA

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F/V Heather Lynn, Point Judith RI

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F/V Lisa Ann II, Newburyport MA
F/V Star, Newburyport MA

Joseph Geary
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F/V Tenacious II, Harwich MA

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F/V Seaborne, Green Harbor MA

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F/V Jamie & Ashley, Gloucester MA

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F/V Moragh K, New Bedford MA

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F/V Double Diamond II, New Bedford MA
F/V Hustler, New Bedford MA
F/V Resilient, New Bedford MA
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F/V Capt'n Lee, Port Clyde ME

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F/V Capt'n Mark, Boston MA

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F/V Shamrock, Wareham MA

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F/V Dianne Lynn, Gloucester MA
F/V William Lynn, Portland ME

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F/V Pretender, Kennebunk ME

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F/V Ouija, Chatham MA

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F/V Hayley Ann, Arundel ME

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F/V Zachary T, Harwich MA

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F/V Teresa Marie IV, Gloucester MA
F/V Harmony, Gloucester MA
F/V Nobska, New Bedford MA
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F/V Jerry & Joe, Portland ME
F/V Lori Ann, Portland ME
F/V Christina Carol, Portland ME

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F/V Vila Nova Do Corvo I, New Bedford MA
F/V Hera, New Bedford MA
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F/V Cowboy, New Bedford MA

F/V Apollo, New Bedford MA
F/V Ilha Do Corvo, New Bedford MA
F/V Southern Crusader II, New Bedford MA
F/V Sasha Lee, New Bedford MA
F/V Sancor, New Bedford MA
F/V My Way, New Bedford MA
F/V Triunfo, New Bedford MA
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Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association
Midcoast Fishermen's Association
Northeast Seafood Coalition
Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association