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December 31, 2009

Mr. John Pappalardo, Chairman and
Members of the New England Fisheries Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Chairman Pappalardo and Members of the New England Fisheries
Management Council:

I write to respectfully request that, at its upcoming meeting on
January 26, the New England Fisheries Management Council reconsider
and reverse its recent decision to sharply reduce fishing days for sea
scallops, from 37 to 29 days, for 2010. I believe that the Council's
decision was not based upon the best available science, and that the
proposed restrictions on scallop fishing would have dire and unnecessary
economic impacts on communities that are already severely stressed.

If the Council's decision stands, fishing communities will sustain a
devastating economic blow at the worst possible time. Reducing scallop
fishing by 22 percent, as the Council's decision would do, will result in a
\$40 million loss to scallopers and a \$200 million loss to fishing communities
and onshore businesses.



The New England Fisheries Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, which is tasked with providing unbiased and science-based data on the health of the fishery, has recently reported that scallops are not overfished, and that the scallop fishery could sustainably support a fishing level similar to 2009. In light of these findings, there does not appear to be any compelling case for imposing severe restrictions that will result in such economic hardship in our fishing community. In the interest of using the best scientific information available for management decisions, I believe reconsideration and reversal of the decision to reduce scallop fishing effort in 2010 is warranted.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.A. Bowler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

cc: Massachusetts Delegation