

April 29, 2010

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Locke:

I am writing to urge you to take immediate action to help the commercial fishing industry in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As you are aware, on May 1st, an experimental new system for allocating "catch shares" within the commercial fishery will begin with the net result likely to be devastating to the fishermen of Massachusetts and to our state's economy.

The New England groundfish industry has a major economic impact on our state and on our region. Our historic fishing ports are facing real economic challenges. It has been estimated that groundfish catch landings annually contribute an estimated \$313 million to our region's economy. Given the multiplier effect that the industry has on our ports and our state it is imperative that we maintain at least the current level of landings, or we will likely face a loss of infrastructure within our working waterfronts that will be impossible to replace.

Industry stakeholders believe that the imposition of "catch shares" in its present form will further reduce those landings and cause many of the small family owned fishing operations to go out of business. In the short-term it is vital to maintain the economic viability of our current fishing infrastructure while long-term solutions like improvements to the scientific study of groundfish stocks are undertaken.

I have had the great opportunity to meet with and talk to a large number of the working fishermen and women who make up the Massachusetts fishing industry. Their hard work, dedication to their community, willingness to be partners in fostering a sustainable fishery and the impact the industry has on the state's economy is what spurs me to act. We should not proceed with the "catch shares" program in its present form while so much uncertainty exists regarding the economic impact of the rules and while the true state of our fishing stocks remain unknown.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you act on the appeal made by Senator Scott Brown, Representative Barney Frank, and other congressional leaders from New England and exercise your authority to implement emergency regulations that would

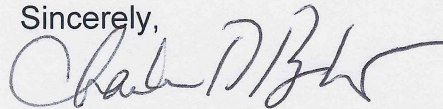
increase the 2010 annual catch limits for the nineteen stocks in the multi-species fishery. The current limits could result in the extraordinary situation where one pass of the trawl could land the allocated limit for a single species. The catch limits must be sufficient to maintain the viability of the industry while promoting the sustainability of the stocks.

Given the direness of this circumstance, if the aforementioned is not adopted, I would request a delay in the implementation of current regulations to allow time for sound management alternatives to be developed.

The situation at this time calls for extraordinary action and leadership. I believe that working with the fishing industry we can maintain a viable ground fishery and sustainable stocks to ensure that the industry remains an important part of our economy and culture well into the future.

I thank you for your timely consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Charles D. Baker

cc:

Senator John Kerry
Senator Scott Brown
Representative Barney Frank
Representative John Tierney
Governor Deval Patrick
Senate President Therese Murray
Speaker Robert DeLeo
Senator Bruce Tarr
Senator Mark Montigny
Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante
Representative Robert M. Koczera
Representative Stephen R. Canessa
Representative Antonio F. D. Cabral
Representative John F. Quinn
Mayor Scott Lang
Mayor Carolyn Kirk