

# MR. PRESIDENT, WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Dear President Obama,

My name is Russell Sherman, and I am a life-long fisherman. Like New England fisherman before me have done for 387 years, I take my vessel, the 72-foot F/V *Lady Jane* from the port of Gloucester, Massachusetts, into North Atlantic waters to bring back cod, haddock, flounder, and other groundfish for America's table. I hope that while you're in New England, you and your family are enjoying a few meals of our fresh catch — there's none better tasting or healthier in the world.

Mr. President, my fellow fishermen and I need your leadership. We are small businessmen and women who want to continue the profession we love. We have worked hard over the past 16 years to rebuild groundfish stocks. Today, some stocks are fully rebuilt, and most others are expected to rebuild in three years, by 2014. According to federal forecasts, a fully rebuilt fishery will yield a sustainable catch nearly five times current landings.



At a time when we should be hopeful about the future of our businesses, we are desperate instead. We are being driven from our work and the fishery we have helped to rebuild. Ironically, what's putting us out of work are the rules to rebuild the fishery. The most recent version of these rules — effective on May 1, 2010 — impose very low annual catch limits on stocks for the next three years, and at the same time institute a “catch share” system.

Take my case. Under the 2010 rules, my permit allows an annual catch of only 60,000 lbs of groundfish. At an average price of \$1.50 a pound, that's an annual gross of \$90,000, or about one-quarter of my business' gross income last year. I simply cannot run my business and support my crew of four — each with a family — on only \$90,000 a year.

My business is only one of hundreds facing extinction. While there will be a small handful of “winners” under these new rules, the vast majority of us will be losers. And when we “losers” are forced out, jobs will be lost, coastal communities gutted, and crucial commercial fishing infrastructure gone forever. Is this the way to rebuild our storied, centuries-old groundfish fishery?

I belong to an organization called the Northeast Seafood Coalition, a New England-wide organization of 255 small, entrepreneurial fishing businesses and allied support businesses that participates in the public process. The Coalition has tried to bring this matter to the attention of your Department of Commerce. We have tried to offer constructive solutions to the challenge of rebuilding fisheries without at the same time destroying them. But our efforts have fallen on deaf ears.

Mr. President, we desperately need your leadership. We ask that you please direct your Department of Commerce to listen to us and work with us. We know that we can meet this challenge by working together.

Sincerely yours,

*Russell A. Sherman*

Russell Sherman, Captain, F/V *Lady Jane*  
Port of Gloucester, Massachusetts



## NORTHEAST SEAFOOD COALITION

WORKING TOGETHER ON THE FUTURE OF FISHERIES.

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