

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 24, 2011

Eric C. Schwaab
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20190

Dear Mr. Schwaab:

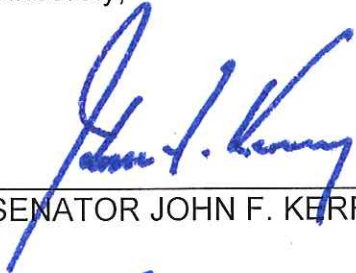
We are writing to request that you take emergency action to prevent Nantucket Lightship Closed Area trips from occurring in fishing year 2011. Both the scallop industry and the New England Fisheries Management Council strongly support this emergency action.

Framework 22 was scheduled to prevent access to the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area in 2011; however, the agency has failed to implement Amendment 15 and Framework 22 in a timely manner. This delay is unacceptable and has resulted in the current fishing season operating under Framework 21, which allows limited fishing in the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area. As I am sure you are aware, the highly successful scallop area rotation program will be adversely affected if the Nantucket Lightship closed area trips take place this fishing year. The success of the rotational system depends on the timely opening and closing of access areas, and if vessels decide to fish in the Nantucket Lightship area because of delayed implementation of Framework 22, future yields could be reduced and the success of the program jeopardized.

The fishing industry and Council have worked together to develop a sustainable management plan that has made the scallop fishery the most successful in the country. However, the new management plan will only achieve the desired sustainability of the scallop resource through a timely implementation schedule, and the ongoing administrative delays could negatively impact this historically successful fishery. This is also a clear example that proves fishermen are responsible stewards of our Ocean resources and support science backed conservation measures that preserve and sustain their fishery.

The agency needs to take immediate action, and we urge you to issue an emergency regulation to keep the Nantucket Lightship Area closed this year. Thank you for your attention to this request, and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,


SENATOR JOHN F. KERRY


CONGRESSMAN BARNEY FRANK


SENATOR SCOTT BROWN


CONGRESSMAN JOHN F. TIERNEY


CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM R. KEATING