



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONGRESSWOMAN
CHELLIE PINGREE

1ST DISTRICT
MAINE

April 29, 2011

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Herbert Clark Hoover Building
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco,

Thank you for your work to support the United States fishing industry through responsible and sustainable fisheries policies. The United States has a long record of leading the international community in regard to the sustainable management of Atlantic bluefin tuna and other highly migratory species.

I have heard from many fishermen in Maine who are concerned about the Administration's proposal to list Atlantic bluefin tuna as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). There are hundreds of bluefin commercial and recreational permit holders in Maine and this fishery supports countless businesses and communities in Maine and throughout the country.

Fishing for Atlantic bluefin tuna in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is already tightly regulated to ensure that it meets the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) science-based quota. Restrictive regulations implemented by ICCAT have meant sacrifices on the part of Maine fishermen but have also helped move toward building the Atlantic bluefin tuna back to sustainable levels. Recently, ICCAT has made significant strides toward ensuring bluefin are harvested at a sustainable level and this is the appropriate process for regulating a species that travel up and down the western Atlantic with crossover to the eastern Atlantic stock.

U.S. regulation of the Atlantic bluefin tuna via the ESA is inappropriate because it would serve to reward the less conservation-minded behavior of other ICCAT nations and would likely not have a great impact on the total health of the stock. Maine fishermen have worked hard to make the industry more sustainable and rebuild the stock and should benefit from their sacrifices.

As you are determining whether to move forward with an ESA listing, please consider the international negotiating implications of this decision and whether it truly serves to conserve the species or just shifts the catch effort away from a responsible domestic industry to other countries who fish less responsibly and are not subject to the same conservation restrictions as U.S. fishermen.

Thank you again for your hard work and I look forward to working with you and the fishermen of

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Maine to improve the management of the Atlantic bluefin fishery and the other fisheries on which the Maine economy depends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chellie R", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress