



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Secretary of Commerce**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

June 1, 2011

The Honorable Barney Frank  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Frank:

Thank you for your letter, dated April 5, 2011, regarding the economic challenges facing Massachusetts and New England groundfish fishermen.

On March 17, 2011, the Economic Development Administration's Deputy Assistant Secretary, Brian McGowen, convened a high-level interagency coordination meeting at the White House. The deployment of the Economic Development and Assessment Teams to the Northeast resulted from this meeting. These teams met with local community and business leaders to assess current and emerging economic issues. I sincerely hope this initiative will help these communities, and others, achieve their economic goals.


Your letter requested that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service consider rolling over unmet quota into the 2011 fishing year. As you indicated, under current regulations, up to 10 percent of any unused quota from the 2010 fishing year can be rolled over into the 2011 fishing year. We put this provision in place to address industry safety concerns. It removes the incentive to fish in bad weather at the end of the fishing year by allowing fishermen to retain some unused quota for the next fishing year. This type of rollover also exists in the Atlantic sea scallop fishery and in other fisheries around the country, for generally the same reasons.

We share your desire to allow the maximum amount of fish to be caught under established limits and are reviewing the possibility of increasing the percentage of permitted rollover. It is important that we collaborate with the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) to consider the interrelated biological, economic, and legal issues that arise with this proposal. Using the best available science and public input, we will work with the Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee to ensure equitable treatment of any uncaught quota and minimize risk of overfishing of some stocks as a result of increased rollover. I am committed to working closely with the Council on appropriate action that maximizes fishing opportunity.

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If you have any questions, please contact April Boyd, Assistant Secretary for  
Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,



Gary Locke