

SCOTT P. BROWN
MASSACHUSETTS

359 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-4543
(202) 228-2646 FAX

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

ARMED SERVICES

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SMALL BUSINESS

April 23, 2012

Mr. John Mackey, Co-CEO
Mr. Walter Robb, Co-CEO
Whole Foods Market, Inc.
550 Bowie Street
Austin, TX 78703-4644

Dear Mr. Mackey and Mr. Robb,

I write to you today regarding the decision of Whole Foods Market to no longer sell seafood that it does not consider sustainable. I'm concerned that your decision has more to do with political correctness than with sound reasoning. Aside from being based on uncertain science, this decision will hurt Massachusetts fishermen and their families at a time when they are already struggling to survive under onerous government regulations.

For the past two years, New England fishermen have been operating under a strict quota management system that greatly limits fishing, along with limitations on gear types and fishing areas. This has resulted in a dramatic contraction of the fleet. Now many of my constituents and the communities that depend on them are struggling to make ends meet.

Adding to this problem is the uncertainty of the science that determines how many fish can be caught. Nowhere is this more evident than in the recent assessment of Gulf of Maine cod, a New England tradition. In 2008, fishermen were told that the best available science showed that Gulf of Maine was no longer overfished and the stock was being rebuilt to a sustainable level. Three years later, that same science showed that the cod was dramatically low, resulting in an emergency measure to ensure that the fleet was not decimated. Now cod fishermen face an uncertain future through no fault of their own—they were fishing the amount they were told they could fish sustainably.

American fishermen operate under some the strictest management rules in the world. They are already limited by uncertain and inexact science by the federal agency in charge of regulating the industry. I am deeply troubled that you apparently made this decision without taking into consideration the impact it would have on the fishermen and their families that I represent, and I urge you to reconsider.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to working with you on better ways to support local businesses.

Sincerely,



Scott P. Brown
United States Senator

2400 JFK FEDERAL BUILDING
BOSTON, MA 02203
PHONE: (617) 565-3170
FAX: (617) 723-7325

18 MAIN STREET EXTENSION, SUITE 202
PLYMOUTH, MA 02360
PHONE: (508) 830-0040
FAX: (508) 830-0288

1550 MAIN STREET, SUITE 406
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01103
PHONE: (413) 788-2693
FAX: (413) 788-2692

HAROLD D. DONOHUE FEDERAL BUILDING
595 MAIN STREET, SUITE 105
WORCESTER, MA 01608
PHONE: (508) 791-3570
FAX: (508) 791-3572