

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 5, 2012

The Honorable Rebecca Blank
Acting Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Room 5858
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Acting Secretary Blank:

We are extremely concerned about a recent National Marine Fisheries Service report which included troubling information regarding potential declines in groundfish stocks in both Georges Bank and the Gulf of Maine.

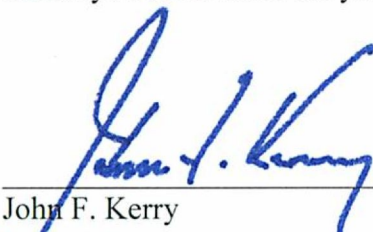
Those numbers suggest the possibility of further difficulties for fishermen and fishing communities in Massachusetts, specifically the small boat fishermen who can least bear the burden of additional declines in available fish. It is our understanding that these declines are not related to overfishing and not due to the actions of our fishermen. We must take immediate action to provide relief to fishing communities and to improve fisheries science so that there will be fish to catch in the future.

In response to this information, we again ask that the federal government take immediate and decisive action to provide a disaster declaration for New England fishermen and fishing communities. For the past two years, the New England Congressional delegation and New England Governors have pushed the federal government to issue a disaster declaration. We believe the evidence is now overwhelming in favor of such a declaration.

We also request that the federal government provide emergency disaster assistance to our fishermen and fishing communities to assist them in dealing with any future declines in fishing related to the new information provided by NMFS.

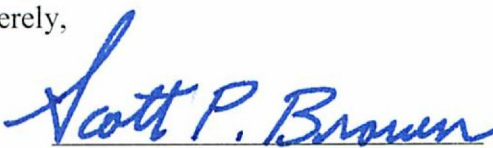
We have also asked for a meeting in Massachusetts with Acting Assistant Administrator Sam Rauch and stakeholders to review the current science, fishing allocation process and to determine the options available for our fishermen and our fishing communities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our requests.



John F. Kerry
United States Senator

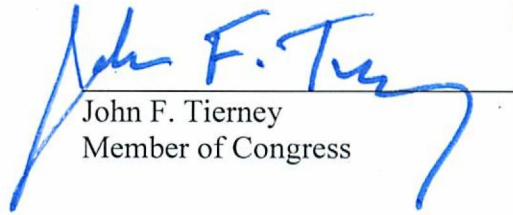
Sincerely,



Scott P. Brown
United States Senator



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress