

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

September 6, 2012

Mr. Samuel D. Rauch
Acting Assistant Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

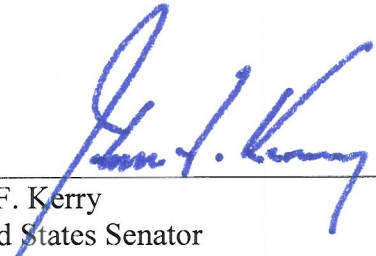
Dear Mr. Rauch,

We are writing to lend our support to the proposal submitted to you by the Northeast Seafood Coalition on August 10, 2012, for a one-year modification to the harbor porpoise consequence closure currently due to take effect in the Gulf of Maine this fall. Current regulations provide the Assistant Administrator with the authority to revise a closure if the Agency determines the boundary or timing of a closed area is inappropriate (50 CFR 229.33(f)).

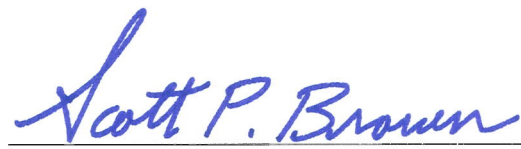
It is clear to us that the Coalition has worked closely with the affected sectors and our fishermen throughout the Gulf of Maine region to develop this plan that very carefully considers the various conservation and economic implications of such a modification. It is also clear to us that this modification will provide significantly greater conservation benefits for harbor porpoise and reduce the economic impacts on our fishermen. We urge your timely approval of this request.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing efforts to work with us to ensure a sustainable and viable groundfish fishery in New England.


Sincerely,



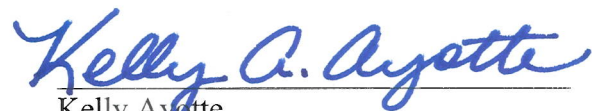
John F. Kerry
United States Senator



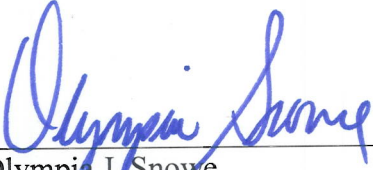
Scott P. Brown
United States Senator



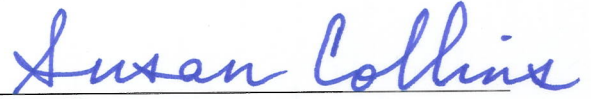
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



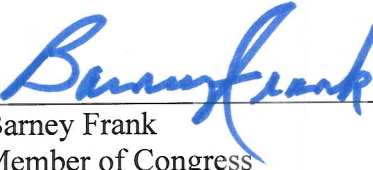
Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



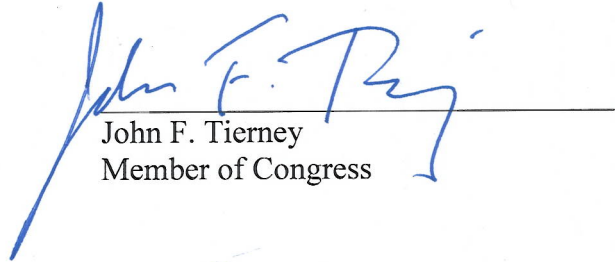
Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator



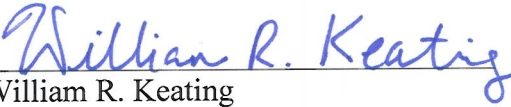
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



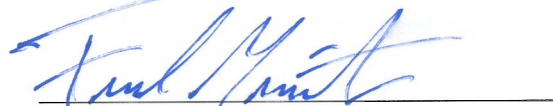
Barney Frank
Member of Congress



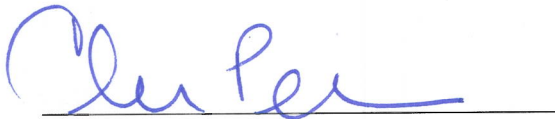
John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



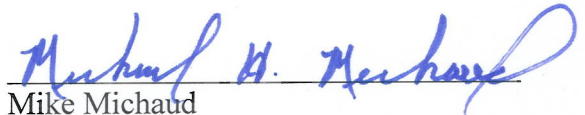
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Frank Guinta
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Mike Michaud
Member of Congress