



For Immediate Release
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City of Gloucester Releases Blueprint for Fishing Crisis Recovery

Immediate financial relief and redeployment of fleet are highest priority

(Gloucester, MA) – The City of Gloucester today issued “The Gloucester Bridge Plan: A Response to the New England Groundfisheries Crisis.” The bridge plan focuses on preserving the core assets of the fleets and the ports during the groundfish recovery period, while using the crisis as an opportunity to retool the industry through investments in sustainable, innovative businesses and practices.

The plan is as follows:

Transition Assistance to Fishermen and Crew

Transition assistance is needed for fishermen to meet immediate financial demands while their boats are idled at the docks, including unemployment insurance, mortgage protection, SBA programs to restructure debt, dockage and fuel relief, and other measures available to declared disaster areas.

Transition Assistance to Shoreside Businesses

Fishing fleets rely on support services of the region’s ports, including marine railways, engine repair, ice production, and marine supplies. Transition assistance is needed to stabilize these companies during the recovery period.

Redeployment of Fishing Boats as Research Vessels

Chartering of fishing boats as research vessels will accomplish three goals: a dramatic enhancement in the quality and amount of data used in running stock assessment models; a redeployment source of income for fishermen during the recovery period; and the opportunity to enhance geographically-dispersed data collection for numerous other ocean research programs.

Investment in a Sustainable, Innovative Fishery

New England fleets and ports, with a long history of adaptation and innovation, have the opportunity to invest in a shift from a high-volume, low-value fisheries to a high-value, low-volume fisheries with a lighter ecosystem footprint. Examples of current proposals include retrofitting of fishing boats for high-quality and flexible, multiple-species harvesting and fuel-efficiency; partnerships of fishermen and processors in live-fish markets, freeze-dried and other value-added products; expansion of local fresh catch programs to include institutional customers; processing of chitin and other products from lobster, crab, and clamshell waste and invasive green crabs; poly-culture of shellfish, kelp, seaweed and fish habitat restoration; hatchery stock enhancements; green chemistry solutions from the ocean biomass; and others.

Collaborative Review of Fisheries Management

Fishing fleets and ports are buffeted by short-term shifts in allowable catches and other management measures. A multiple-stakeholder, collaborative effort to propose better management

approaches is needed to support sustainable fisheries and ecosystems, fishing fleets, ports, and access by consumers to healthy local fish and other seafood products.

About the City of Gloucester

America's oldest seaport, the City of Gloucester is known throughout the world as an authentic, working waterfront community, a place of spectacular natural beauty, and home to a diverse population of about 30,000 residents. An important center for the fishing industry, Gloucester also is proud of its rich art heritage as one of the premier art colonies in the United States. The City is a destination for thousands of visitors who visit the harbor and its beaches during the summertime. In recent years, Gloucester has diversified its traditional maritime economy, adding leading small research institutions such as the UMass Amherst Large Pelagics Research Laboratory and the Ocean Alliance to the array of state and federal agencies working in the city, and with investments in robotics and new product development from the fishery.

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