



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

October 25, 2013

New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
Attn: Thomas A. Nies

Re: Atlantic Sea Scallop Small Dredge Program

Dear Members of the New England Fishery Management Council:

In anticipation of your November 20, 2013 meeting, I am writing to request that you reject the request to make the single dredge permit issue for the scallop fishery a priority for the 2014 fishing year. The elimination or amendment of the single dredge permit exemption ("Exemption") would have no effect on conservation of scallop fishery, but it would have severe, deleterious economic and human consequences on New Bedford. The port of New Bedford has been the nation's highest grossing fishing port for 12 consecutive years, based in large part on its scallop fishery, which generates over \$400 million in direct annual revenue.

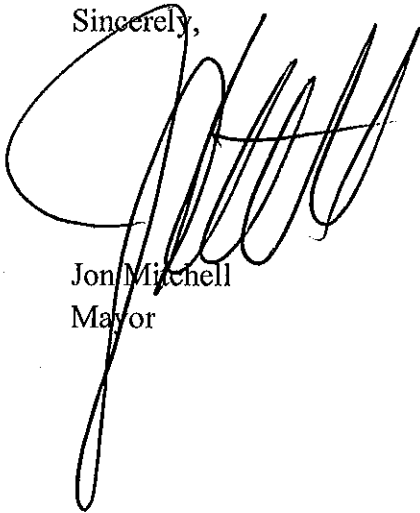
The proponent of the Exemption's elimination has argued that repeal of the Exemption would help protect the scallop fishery, but this is not true. No scientific evidence exists to support this request. The Exemption affects how each year's total scallop catch is allocated between vessels, but it has no effect whatsoever on the total amount of scallops that can legally be caught. That amount, the Annual Catch Limit, is, as you know, supposed to be based on science and conservation principles. Elimination of the Exemption would provide no added conservation benefit but would simply shift the profits of the scallop industry from one group of vessels to another group of vessel owners.

While repeal of the Exemption would not help further conserve the scallop fishery, it indisputably would harm the people of New Bedford. There are approximately 20 single dredge vessels that fish out of New Bedford. The crew members directly employed on those vessels support approximately 75 to 100 area families. If the Exemption were to be eliminated, the single dredge boat owners would go out of business, and dozens of New Bedford fishing families would have no means of support. Moreover, there would also be a negative ripple effect on the

many shoreside operations in New Bedford that do business with small dredge vessels, including fish houses, fuel companies, accountants, lawyers, ice plants, welders, painters, supply houses, electricians and trucking companies.

The Exemption has been in place for nearly 20 years and has helped the port of New Bedford and New Bedford fishing families survive trying times and in some instances thrive. Repeal of the Exemption would serve only to concentrate wealth in a subset of boat owners and to cast hundreds of New Bedford residents into certain economic distress. I urge you not to make the Exemption a priority for the 2014 fishing year and to express your support for continuation of the Exemption.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Mitchell', is written over the printed name and title.

Jon Mitchell
Mayor