

NORTHEAST SEAFOOD COALITION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NSC STATEMENT ON POTENTIAL FEDERAL DISASTER FUNDING FOR NE GROUDFISH FISHING INDUSTRY

Earlier this week, the Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC) board of directors adopted a motion to support a draft proposal from Senator Kerry's office designed to help mitigate impacts of the dismal forecast for 2013 fishing opportunities. NSC views federal disaster relief as being one important component of a plan for 2013 and beyond.

This is an important draft proposal that must be considered very seriously and we are grateful to the Senator for taking this initiative. We will continue to work with Sen. Kerry and other Congressional leaders from the region to assist them with development of a final mitigation plan. As NSC has previously stated, for any mitigation plan to be effective everything has to be on the table—including science, management, the law, and financial assistance. For this reason, Sen. Kerry's draft proposal includes funding to allow the industry to voluntarily develop a buyback plan option.

There is a very brief window of opportunity for Congress to fund disaster assistance in September and so failure to include this funding would take an important option off the table for the industry to consider in the future. This does not in any way force the industry to implement a buyback, but it does make sure the funding is available should the industry decide it does want a buyback sometime in the coming months.

Fishermen have consistently complied with science and management measures, but several critical stocks on Georges Bank and in the Gulf of Maine continue to decline and face drastic reductions in upcoming fishing years—beginning in 2013. NSC is actively working with other industry and Agency leaders, Council members and Congressional offices to develop a coherent and effective plan of proposed mitigation measures.

NSC—the largest membership organization in the northeast groundfish fishery, which represents a majority of the active fishermen in the region—is committed to working with the Council, Congress and the Agency to develop and implement solutions that will ensure the survival of the northeast groundfish fishery.

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About the Northeast Seafood Coalition:

The Northeast Seafood Coalition is a non-profit organization representing over 250 commercial fishing entities and over 500 groundfish permits in the northeast United States on political and policy issues affecting their interests as participants in the groundfish fishery and the Sector program in the Northeast multispecies groundfish fishery. NSC members are small, independent, entrepreneurial businesses that fish for—and support fishing for—cod, haddock, flounders, and other groundfish species along the northeast coast. NSC's fishing business members fish from small and large ports all along the northeast coast. They fish small, medium, and large vessels, and they employ all groundfish gear types.

NSC works for rules that embody real solutions to complex fishery problems.

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