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NORTHEAST SEAFOOD COALITION AND ITS MEMBERS EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO U.S. SENATORS FOR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT NORTHEAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

August 29, 2013—Gloucester, Mass. Yesterday, 230 commercial groundfish fishing industry members of the Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC), a non-profit industry membership organization, wrote to Senator Barbara A. Mikulski, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations and Senator Richard C. Shelby, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations to express sincere thanks for their efforts to secure \$150 million in fishery disaster assistance in the FY2014 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Additionally, NSC executive director Jackie Odell wrote to Senators representing the Northeast region thanking them for their efforts to help secure a future for the fishery.

In September 2012, Acting Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank issued a fishery disaster declaration under federal law for the Northeast groundfish fishery due to unprecedented reductions of up to 78 percent in the amount of groundfish fishermen are able to harvest, despite fishermen's adherence to strict catch limits.

Even with the disaster declaration, industry has yet to see the Department of Commerce take actions needed to mitigate the disaster. In contrast, many Members of Congress—including Sen. Mikulski and Sen. Shelby—have been at the forefront of Congressional efforts to provide the critically needed disaster assistance. According to Odell's letter, FY2014 appropriations measures including improvements to the use of Saltonstall-Kennedy funds and ensuring the cost of monitoring are covered will be critical to helping small fishing-dependent businesses survive.

Both Odell and the NSC industry-member letters stress that the current fishery disaster is a consequence of natural forces far beyond the control of man. "We are told that just like nature can wreak havoc on man's world through sudden events like hurricanes, tsunamis and droughts—it can also have devastating effects on the productivity of our marine ecosystems... We know they will recover—and with time and better science, so will we, provided something can be done in the meantime to preserve our world for that better day," the NSC industry member letter reads.

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Odell wrote that the recovery of the Northeast groundfish fishery will not be simple: it will require substantial improvements and adjustments to science and management; moreover, a recovery will take time. Fishery disaster assistance, she wrote, is absolutely essential if there is to be a future for the Northeast groundfish fishery.

NSC is grateful to Senators Mikulski, Shelby, Collins, Shaheen, Warren, Reed, Blumenthal, Schumer, Menendez, King, Ayotte, Markey, Whitehouse, Murphy, Gillibrand, and Chiesa for their tireless support and efforts to secure a future for our fishery, families, and communities in the face of the declared disaster.

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About the Northeast Seafood Coalition:

The Northeast Seafood Coalition is a non-profit organization representing over 250 commercial fishing entities, which hold over 500 limited access 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.