



January 16, 2014

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senator

The Honorable Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senator

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

The Honorable Christopher Murphy
United States Senator

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senator

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senator

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the 361 fishing and shore-side businesses from the Gulf of Maine to the Mid-Atlantic that make up the Northeast Seafood Coalition, thank you for all of the tireless work you and your excellent staff did over the past year and a half to support the appropriation of both disaster assistance for the northeast groundfish fishery and the full amount of receipts to the Saltonstall-Kennedy Fund.

As I wrote to you in August, we especially appreciate your working in bipartisan coalition with like-minded Senators from other regions in support of Chairwoman Mikulski's and Ranking Member Shelby's bill. It is clear that was a very powerful and effective approach and you are all to be congratulated for this extraordinary achievement on our behalf. We will never forget how hard you fought for us.

As you have seen, drastic changes in groundfish stock assessments have left us with annual catch limits that simply cannot support a viable fishery. Severe impacts are being felt in countless businesses, families and communities throughout the region and the situation has only continued to deteriorate since the disaster declaration was made in September, 2012.

As you know, the disaster assistance funding is critical to providing our fishermen and shoreside businesses with a bridge to the future when our annual catch limits recover. Consequently, we feel it is absolutely critical that the benefits of this assistance accrue directly to our fishermen and shoreside businesses that are at the center of the disaster. It is their survival that has been and must continue to be our priority. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the disaster funds are utilized as wisely, effectively and swiftly as possible.

We also see great promise for many independent and cooperative research projects to be funded by the S-K program that can substantially augment the direct fishery disaster assistance. As you know, there remains a critical need to improve the science underlying the stock assessments and low annual catch limits that have led to this disaster. This S-K funding opens the door to many highly qualified non-federal scientists and researchers that we believe can contribute substantially to mitigating the disaster and securing a more stable future for our industry. We also look forward to working with you in helping to identify priorities for S-K research and projects that will provide the greatest benefits to our region.

Thank you again for all you have done.

Sincerely,



Jackie Odell
Executive Director