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**NSC GRATEFUL TO MASSACHUSETTS ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE FOR  
BALANCING CONSERVATION WITH NEEDS OF SMALL FISHING BUSINESS**

**May 30, 2013—Boston, Mass.** The Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC) is grateful to Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley and her Office for their continued support for the Northeast commercial groundfish fishery and the small businesses that make up this industry. Particularly today, we are thankful for their staunch effort to fight for a balance between rebuilding fish stocks and preserving historic fishing communities.

Framework Adjustment 48 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan implemented unprecedented, across-the-board reductions of up to 78 percent in the amount of fish northeast commercial groundfish fishermen are able to harvest to feed the world. This doomsday scenario is a far cry from previous scientific reports that indicated key fish stocks would be rebuilt in 2014. Northeast groundfish fishermen are committed to conservation, and as such have and continue to comply with stringent scientific and management measures to protect fish populations. Despite doing their part, these small businesses have had the rug pulled out from under them and are now in the midst of a federally declared fishery disaster due to factors far beyond their control.

These crippling reductions in catch limits simply will not support today's groundfish fishery and have placed our historic groundfish fleet in jeopardy like never before. And, the impact on our fishermen is only the tip of the iceberg. There will not be enough fish landed in our ports to sustain shore-side infrastructure or the demands of American seafood consumers. The global seafood market will simply replace New England groundfish with substitutes from other regions and countries. Once lost, our stake in the world's seafood market may be lost forever. Fishery management is completely out of balance when it cannot sustain both fish populations and the fishing industry.

The request to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration to implement Interim Measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock—as allowed by the law—has been the centerpiece of NSC's bridge for the fishing industry. Interim Measures would prevent the decimation of the inshore fleet and allow time for Congress to secure aid for the fishery, all while continuing to help stocks grow and rebuild. Analysis shows that GOM cod would rebuild by 14 percent under a second year of an Interim catch level. Rebuilding our fish stocks while sustaining our fisheries and communities is precisely the balance Congress intended to strike in its policies for the conservation and management of U.S. fisheries.

Prior to the implementation of Framework 48 and the draconian reductions, Attorney General Coakley

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joined the Northeast Seafood Coalition at the Groundfish Industry Rally held April 29 at the Boston Fish Pier to voice her office's concern for the fishermen and small, fishery-dependent businesses. There the attorney general said, "We need to do this for your livelihood. We need to do this for this industry. As we know from so many boats we've lost, they're not coming back. And if we do not stop this now, [this industry is] not coming back."

We thank Attorney General Coakley for recognizing and acknowledging that a balance between rebuilding fish stocks and sustaining a fishing industry is not currently being achieved. We have to work toward preserving both fish and fishing dependent communities.

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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.