



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact

Nick Brancaleone

Tel: (978) 905-1118

Email: nsc.communications@gmail.com

**NORTHEAST SEAFOOD COALITION GRATEFUL FOR GOVERNOR PATRICK'S LETTER TO SBA DIRECTOR
CERTIFYING SEVERE ECONOMIC INJURY TO MASS. GROUND FISH-DEPENDENT BUSINESSES**

September 16, 2013—Gloucester, Mass. The Northeast Seafood Coalition (NSC) expresses sincere appreciation to Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and the Governor's office for their leadership in certifying to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) that the Massachusetts groundfish industry has suffered substantial economic injury as a result of a fishery resource failure. The Governor's certification is an essential step for the SBA to declare a disaster and make the Massachusetts groundfish fishery eligible for SBA disaster assistance programs including Economic Injury Disaster Loans.

Gov. Patrick wrote to the SBA Director Frank Staggs outlining the critical need for assistance to the Northeast groundfish fishery based on a "commercial fishery failure" for the 2013 fishing season. For Fishing Year 2013, catch limits have been dramatically reduced for key groundfish stocks that are the core of the economic engine that runs the fishery and fishing communities in the Northeast. As a result of dramatic instability within the fishery, many fishermen and groundfish-dependent businesses are not only facing the loss of their business and source of income, but they are also facing the loss of their homes that have been mortgaged to support their businesses.

Gov. Patrick wrote in his letter, "Based on the results of this survey, I hereby certify that in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 13, Part 123.3, at least five (5) small businesses in the counties of Barnstable, Bristol, Essex, Plymouth, Norfolk, and Suffolk Counties in Massachusetts suffered substantial economic injury as a result of the fishery resource disaster. I hereby certify that the degree of economic injury is so severe that financial assistance at reasonable rates and terms is not otherwise available, thereby creating the necessity for federal involvement..."

NSC initiated this process in March 2013 with a request for assistance from former Massachusetts U.S. Senator William "Mo" Cowan, who was a member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. At Sen. Cowan's request, Gov. Patrick's office put the SBA process into full swing. NSC and Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership worked with affected fishermen across coastal counties in Massachusetts to collect the financial impact information required to support the Governor's certification.

—MORE—

SBA assistance is one source of support NSC is working on to help the Northeast groundfish fishery during this time of crisis. NSC is hopeful that SBA's disaster assistance programs will add an important component to a larger need for direct financial assistance including the Fisheries Disaster Mitigation Fund approved in July by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

NSC is thankful to Gov. Patrick and his office, former Sen. Cowan and his office, MA DMF, MEMA, and the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership for their work to assist in providing the groundfish fishery in Massachusetts with critically needed federal assistance. In the coming days, NSC will continue to work with other Northeast states in which our members reside to help certify economic injury and gain access to SBA assistance.

###

About the Northeast Seafood Coalition:

The Northeast Seafood Coalition is a non-profit organization representing over 361 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.