



Dannel P. Malloy

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

August 23, 2012

The Honorable Rebecca Blank
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Acting Secretary Blank,

As provided under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. § 1861a), the State of Connecticut is formally requesting your determination that a commercial fishery failure has occurred in the Northeast multispecies (groundfish) fishery and that you provide appropriate financial disaster relief to the fishing industry as a result of that failure.

The regulatory framework that arose out of Amendment 16 to the Multispecies Fishery Management Plan in 2010 has had negative economic consequences on all of New England, including fishing communities in southeastern Connecticut that rely on groundfish as an important component of the seafood economy. In addition, recruitment failure in the Southern New England Winter Flounder stock prompted NOAA Fisheries to impose in mid-2009 a possession prohibition of this fish by federal permit holders. Changing environmental conditions due to climate change have been cited as a causative factor in this recruitment failure. The combined effects of both of these issues are felt by the vessel owners, crew and ancillary shore-side businesses that support the fishing industry.

Admittedly, Connecticut is a small player in the overall New England groundfish fishery in terms of landings and landings value, and this is reflective of the relatively small number of vessels with limited-access multispecies permits. Nevertheless, compared to the overall New England trend in groundfish landings value (table below), Connecticut has experienced a greater relative decline in the value of groundfish landings at Connecticut ports and the value of groundfish landings by Connecticut-based vessels (regardless of state landed).

Nominal Value of Groundfish Landings ¹	2008	2009	2010
New England Landings Value	\$90,131,938	\$85,088,241	\$83,293,667
Connecticut Landings Value	\$176,088	\$41,799	\$13,316
Landings Value by CT Vessels	\$358,968	\$126,180	\$55,881

¹ Values derived from tables 6 and 7 of Kitts *et al.* 2011: *2010 Final Report on the Performance of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery (May 2010 – April 2011)*. US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 11-19; 97p.

In addition, Connecticut has other vessels that, while not directly engaged in the groundfish fishery, will be impacted by groundfish fishermen that will be forced by economic circumstances to redirect their fishing effort toward other resources. For example, the monkfish, scup and summer flounder fisheries are a very important component of Connecticut fisheries landings. Monkfish fishermen in southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic have expressed concern about the activation of latent monkfish permits, and the effect that will have on their livelihoods. With scup and summer flounder, Connecticut fishermen are already subject to limited state quotas for those species; additional fishermen directing on these species will spread that limited quota thinner.

Again, I respectfully request that you fully consider this appeal for a groundfish disaster declaration. I am hopeful that disaster relief will mitigate the consequences of the issues facing the groundfish fishery. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will provide you with any additional information that you may require. Please feel free to contact David G. Simpson, Director of the Marine Fisheries Division, at 860.447.4306 or David.Simpson@ct.gov for anything that you require. If there is anything I can do to assist in your determination, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

CC: Senator Joseph I. Lieberman
Senator Richard Blumenthal
Representative Joseph Courtney
Commerce Undersecretary Jane Lubchenco
Commerce Assistant Secretary Eric Schwaab
NMFS Administrator Sam Rauch
NMFS NERO Director John Bullard
NEFMC Chairman Rip Cunningham
DEEP Commissioner Daniel Esty
DEEP MFD Director David Simpson