

Congressman Tierney Joins Barney Frank's Call for Lubchenco resignation

Earlier today, Congressman Barney Frank, appearing on WBSM's Saving Seafood hour, called for the Obama Administration's NOAA Director to leave.

Fellow Democrat John Tierney has joined him in calling for her departure.

Congressman Tierney's office has issued the following statement:

MASSACHUSETTS - July 8, 2010 - Today, Congressmen Barney Frank and John Tierney called for Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to step down. After months of continued tension between Dr. Lubchenco and the fishing community, the lawmakers said it is time to take a look at NOAA leadership and ensure that top positions are filled with officials committed to increasing responsiveness and accountability.

"For too long our local fishing community has dealt with unfair regulations, treatment, and practices from officials at NOAA," Congressman Tierney said. "As issues continue to arise, we question whether Dr. Lubchenco and NOAA leadership have done enough to increase responsiveness to the public and Congress, hold agency representatives accountable, and take a critical look at unfair catch share regulations. If the current NOAA leadership is not going to commit to work with local fishermen and end the culture of no accountability at NOAA, I believe it is time for them to be replaced with leadership that will refocus on these issues."

"I have for sometime been disappointed in Dr. Lubchenco's stance towards the fisherman, which seems to approach hostility," said Frank. "This latest report confirms that the agency has been badly run without clear initiatives from her to correct the egregious problems at NOAA, and that is why I have called for her removal."

The Congressmen continue to actively press for answers from NOAA regarding numerous issues discussed during the field hearing spearheaded by Congressman Tierney on March 3, 2010 in Gloucester, including specific allegations of mistreatment of local fishermen and the negative economic impact of the new catch-share limits. The Congressmen are also working together on an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit filed against federal fishing regulations.

In addition, Congressman Tierney recently announced legislation that would reform NOAA's Asset Forfeiture Fund to prevent future misuse of NOAA's Asset Forfeiture Fund and provide reimbursements of certain legal fees to fishermen who have been cleared of wrongful allegations. Congressman Frank will also be reconvening a meeting of bipartisan and bicameral Northeast Members of Congress to further press the Administration to provide economic opportunities and assistance to impacted fishing communities.

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