

# GloucesterTimes.com, Gloucester, MA

*December 5, 2010*

## **Editorial: NOAA chief's 'sellout' of U.S. fishermen cries out for her ouster**

When Congressman Barney Frank, fellow Massachusetts Democrat John Tierney and North Carolina Republican ally Walter Jones called for NOAA chief Jane Lubchenco's resignation or ouster this past July, they cited the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration leader's "hostility" toward the American fishing industry.

Less than 48 hours later, Frank mysteriously backed off that call, saying Obama administration officials had assured him that changes within NOAA's embattled enforcement wing and its regulatory policies could be carried out with Lubchenco still in place. And there seemed to be signs of hope.

With Lubchenco seemingly pushed to the background, her Cabinet-level boss — Commerce Secretary Gary Locke — stepped up assure the federal lawmakers, Gov. Deval Patrick and industry leaders that he would adjust allocations built upon NOAA's usual mad-science catch data if the state and industry could show the need for emergency action.

But it is now abundantly clear there can be no fisheries peace as long as Lubchenco is at NOAA's helm. Indeed, Lubchenco's actions at a global conference last month show emphatically she is not fit to represent the U.S. government in any way, let alone head an agency — no matter how renegade NOAA has become.

When she "sold out" the interests of U.S. fishermen, as Maine Republican Sen. Olympia Snowe pretty much put it — that's right, sold out the interests of U.S. small businesses and workers, in the face of a still-struggling U.S. economy — she should have forfeited any chance to serve another day in a federal leadership role.

If the Obama administration — still preaching "jobs, jobs, jobs" while one of its own key agency heads is undercutting independent small businessmen along all of America's coasts — doesn't jettison this phony scientist, that

only confirms the president's goals and promises aren't worth the paper on which they're written.

And if Frank, Tierney, Jones and other fed lawmakers don't mount a full-court press to rid American fishermen of this federal scam, they shouldn't bother touting their support for a fishing industry that needs hard and fast action, not inside political bargaining and rhetoric.

With a chance to make some key points for U.S. fishermen and the strides they've made through years of sacrifice and effective conservation efforts, Lubchenco instead pitched steep further reductions in limits on fishing for bluefin tuna in the western Atlantic to representatives of ICCAT — the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

It's telling that even ICCAT officials — perhaps more mindful than Lubchenco that conservation efforts off America's East Coast have allowed for strong rebuilding gains by tuna stocks than the harvests carried out off Europe and Mediterranean countries — rejected her call as too extreme.

ICCAT still approved a reduction of western Atlantic tuna catch of 50 metric tons to 1,750 tons, a 2.9 percent cut, and a cut that will hit tuna fishermen out of Gloucester, New Bedford and elsewhere,

But that was a far cry from Lubchenco's draconian push. And the NOAA chief's stand seems more out of touch given that Snowe and other U.S. lawmakers had called on her to push for raising the limit, noting that data shows the fishery could support a limit of more than 2,500 tons.

Beyond that, the American Bluefin Tuna Association says that NOAA — through Lubchenco Diplomacy, of course — agreed to allow to "transfer to Canada" 86.5 metric tons of tuna from the U.S. quota in 2011 and 2012.

That should indeed be Dr. Jane's last straw.

Beyond her contempt for Congress and any congressional advice, beyond her obvious "hostility" toward the fishing industry Frank, Tierney and friends had cited last summer, her ICCAT sellouts show she is a now committed to undercutting America's small, independent, coastal business on the global level.

That's totally unacceptable for anyone representing the U.S. government — especially an administration supposedly committed to "jobs."