

http://www.savingseafood.org/images/documents/congress/sec_locke_re_skate_pollock_yellowtail_and_dogfish_april_20010.pdf

Members of Congress ask Commerce Secretary for "immediate attention" on skate, pollock, yellowtail flounder, and spiny dogfish.

Seven members of the House and Senate have written to Commerce Secretary Gary Locke urging his "immediate attention on a number of critical problems - and proposed solutions - confronting the Northeast's commercial fishing industry." A copy of the letter was sent to Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator of NOAA.

The signers are: Rep. Bill Delahunt, Senator John Kerry, Rep. Barney Frank, Rep. Chellie Pingree, Rep. Madeleine Bordallo, Rep. Jim McGovern, Rep. John Tierney.

The lawmakers stated that "New England's fishermen are struggling to survive in what is one of the worst economic climates for their industry. Of immediate grave concern is the challenging transition to a catch shares fisheries management system. Unless the federal government takes additional steps to help fishermen adjust through this transition, many will be forced out of work. The well-intentioned but outdated and bureaucratic system of fisheries management has created tremendous burdens on fishermen. We need to make every possible effort to nurture, encourage, and facilitate survival of the industry through this difficult period."

The letter outlines "four problems which are needlessly endangering fishing businesses and coastal communities."

[1] They "ask that NOAA Fisheries Service (NMFS) fast-track the incorporation of the most recent skate assessment results and adjust catch limits appropriately to reflect this most recent data."

[2] They "urge NMFS to immediately evaluate the current pollock stock assessments and incorporate any potential quota increases into the FY 2010 allocations."

[3] They "recommend that NMFS assemble a team of scientists to review the stock assessments for Cape Cod yellowtail flounder and compare them to the results of the survey conducted by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, School for Marine Science and Technology."

[4] They "request that NMFS immediately assemble a team of scientific advisors to review the most recent ecosystem data on spiny dogfish stocks and determine an appropriate biomass target - one that recognizes the historical biomass of this species in the ecosystem as well as its direct and indirect impacts on other managed species."