

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

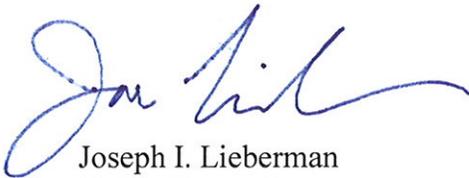
On August 23, 2012 Governor Malloy requested that your Administration consider issuing a disaster declaration as a result of commercial fishery failure in the Northeast groundfish fishery. We write today to back the Governor's request, and express our strong support for a disaster declaration and federal assistance for fishermen in Connecticut and throughout New England.

While the Connecticut groundfish industry is not as large as some of our New England neighbors, it continues to contribute economically and culturally to Connecticut and enjoys a long history in our state. The fishing industry provides employment, requires goods and services sourced in local communities, and harvests fish that contribute to local economies. Despite their economic and cultural contributions, our fishing communities are facing regulatory pressures that are forcing them out of business.

The Connecticut fishing industry has faced continued hardship and decline over the last two decades with a rapid acceleration in recent years. According to recent reports, our fisherman will once again face reduced annual catch limits for several important groundfish species next year. Cod, haddock, American plaice, and yellowtail flounder could be reduced by between 45 percent and 73 percent, even as our state's fleet size has already been significantly impacted by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) regulations. Both Connecticut landing values and landing values by Connecticut vessels have collapsed since 2008. This has left smaller independent fisherman struggling to survive, while forcing others out of the business altogether. Connecticut fishermen are not alone, with more than a third of the New England fleet standing idle and a centuries-old industry is on the verge of collapse.

Given the enormity of the challenge facing this industry, we believe the federal government should take immediate action to provide relief to fishermen and fishing communities across New England, including Connecticut. We ask for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you, the Department of Commerce and the New England's fishing community to address this urgent challenge.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress