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GOVERNOR

**TIMOTHY P. MURRAY**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

December 31, 2009

Mr. Charlie Baker  
The Baker Committee  
70 Fargo St., Suite 202  
Boston, MA 02210

Dear Charlie:

Thank you for your letter of December 11 about the significant challenges facing the fishing industry in Massachusetts.

I could not agree with you more about the economic and cultural importance of commercial fishing to the Commonwealth. That is why my first meeting as governor with representatives of any sector of our economy was with representatives of the fishing industry. Our administration has continued that engagement for the past three years, and worked with fishing communities, state legislators and our federal delegation to fight the disastrous potential impacts of federal regulations, support better science to guide better management, and demand critical economic assistance when fishing families and communities needed it most.

You propose that I call for a moratorium on new federal rules due to take effect this coming spring. I disagree. A moratorium would leave in place the failed Days at Sea system of regulation that is crippling our fishing industry, and do nothing about the ever-falling catch limits mandated by federal law. Nothing less than a complete overhaul of fishing regulation will do, and we are working hard, with our congressional delegation and with Massachusetts fishermen, to ensure that a new system is put in place that better supports the industry at the same time that it better protects the natural resource.

When I first met with the fishing community nearly three years ago, what I heard was that the Days at Sea system was a disaster. It squeezes the commercial fishing fleet, forces fisherman to fish in dangerous weather, and has failed to protect and revive the fish stock the industry depends on for its livelihood. Since then, our Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF),

and I have worked with our congressional delegation to rewrite these unfair and damaging regulations, in favor of ones that will move fishing communities away from boom-and-bust cycles to long term economic viability. We have worked with Senator Tarr of Gloucester to provide \$500,000 to fishermen to develop new systems of sector allocation. The move away from Days at Sea and toward something that is more flexible and sensible has led to innovations in sector allocation, a management effort that many Cape Cod fishermen have effectively adopted. The important thing now is to monitor NOAA's plans to move away from Days at Sea, and aggressively push for rules that will allocate the new shares fairly, protect local economies, avoid consolidation that hurts communities, and provide monitoring that is not an undue burden on fishermen.

You propose that we support the use of better science to support the revival of the groundfish industry. I agree with you completely. Good science must be the backbone of any effective regulatory program, and unfortunately NOAA's science has often raised more questions than it answers. That is why, on December 2, our DMF Director formally challenged the New England Fisheries Management Council's decision to sharply curtail scallop fishing, based on scientific information that was incomplete at best, and why today we have joined members of our delegation in calling for the Council to reconsider and revise its limits for next season at its next meeting. And that is why last spring, I directed EEA, DMF and the School for Marine Science and Technology at UMASS Dartmouth (SMAST) to develop a proposal to NOAA for a major groundfish study. Now, we are working with NOAA to secure federal funding to give us the science we need: a definitive groundfish assessment and study of new, more effective fishing gear.

In the same spirit, I have consistently supported the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute (MFI), a partnership between DMF and the UMass Intercampus Graduate School of Marine Science and Technology (IGS). The MFI has received exceptional congressional support since its inception, including approximately \$5 million annually in federal funds to conduct research activities. SMAST in New Bedford serves as the central headquarters for the Institute. Currently, a three-acre waterfront parcel in the port development area is under construction to provide the MFI with work and storage areas.

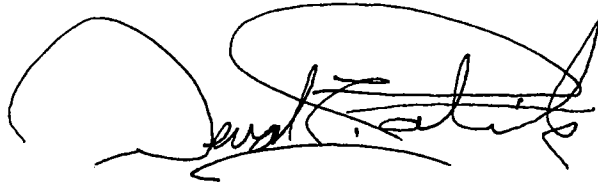
You finally propose that I appoint representatives of commercial fishing to the New England Fishery Management Council. I have already done so, one from Cape Cod and one from New Bedford. I have also appointed the DMF Director, a respected fisheries scientist, and a representative of the recreational fishing sector. I have followed the same principle of assuring broad representation of the commercial fishing sector on the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, which guides fisheries policy in state waters.

With your interest in fishing issues, you may be interested to know about other things we have done in our administration to support our fishing industry and communities:

- Working with the Attorney General's office, we challenged in court the unfair regulations of the National Marine Fisheries Service Framework 42 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and its drastic Days at Sea restrictions.
- In 2007 and 2008, I worked with the late Senator Kennedy, Senator Kerry, Congressmen Frank, Delahunt, and Tierney and other members of the Massachusetts delegation to secure a record \$13.4 million in federal funds for emergency economic assistance to Massachusetts fishing communities. We used these funds for direct economic assistance to fishermen and their families. As a result, over 500 fishermen received checks averaging \$23,500, and many of their crew members and families received both economic assistance and health care coverage.
- We have also worked with the Gloucester Fishing Community Preservation Fund and similar organizations in Boston and the South Shore to effectively use \$12.6 million in mitigation funding from two offshore Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities to create innovative financing and permit banking.
- In the wake of the damage to the state's shellfish industry from the red tide outbreak in 2008, we secured over \$2 million in economic assistance for Massachusetts shell fishermen. Again, working with members of our delegation, we obtained checks averaging over \$4,200 for 263 shell fishermen, funded health insurance, and secured funding to study, predict and lessen the economic impact of future outbreaks.

I welcome your letter and your interest in the fishing industry. As you can see, we made them and their challenges a priority on the day I took office, and have followed through on that commitment with action. We will continue to do so. I hope you will write or call again if there are other policy matters of concern to you. My door has been and remains open to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charlie Baker", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

cc Members of Congressional Delegation  
State Coastal Caucus  
Fishing Organizations