

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 7, 2017

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Attn: Megan Ware
1050 N. Highland Street Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

To Whom it May Concern,

We write regarding the “Draft Addendum XXV to Amendment 3 to the American Lobster Fishery Management Plan.” As the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) moves to finalize a new lobster management plan for the Southern New England stock, we urge you to conduct a thorough scientific review that assesses all factors that could contribute to the status of the stock and an economic impact analysis that evaluates the effects of the plan on the Connecticut fishing industry. Furthermore, we request that ASMFC refrain from finalizing any plans before reviewing new data, such as landings data from 2016, which is currently scheduled for release after the new management plan is finalized. Finally, we urge you to closely consider the opinions of all who work in this important industry.

As elected representatives for the State of Connecticut, we see firsthand that the health of Long Island Sound and the bounty of marine life that call it home directly affect the long-term sustainability of our fishing industry. Stock assessments from 2000 to 2015 by ASMFC illustrated the dramatic decline in Connecticut’s lobster population. These findings brought about new management measures for Connecticut lobstermen to implement. For example, in 2013 the states of New York and Connecticut, in conjunction with the ASMFC, enacted a fall harvest closure.


While we understand the goal of updating the current lobster management plan to rebuild the lobster stock, the effect of these measures on the current Connecticut fishermen must be thoroughly considered before you take any action. Thus, we believe an economic impact assessment on Connecticut fishermen should be a vital component of the analysis done to finalize a new management strategy.

We are concerned that new and relevant data will become available after the plan is finalized. While landings data is only part of the picture, landings data is an important component in understanding how this management plan will effect Connecticut lobstermen. Connecticut lobstermen feel that 2016 was a relatively strong year for the lobster fishery and that stocks were more bountiful. The new landings data will provide important, up-to-date information on this trend and we believe this is relevant information for making a management decision. We urge you to consider this data before you make your decision.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



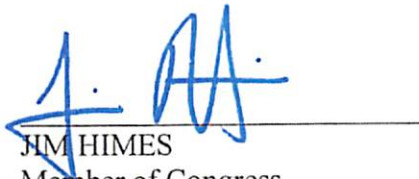
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