

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 14, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to submit a budget amendment for Fiscal Year 2013 to provide emergency funding for fisheries disasters that were declared in 2012. As you know, the Senate version of the Disaster Assistance Supplemental Appropriations bill included \$150 million for these disasters. Regrettably, the final version of this bill approved by Congress included only \$5 million in fisheries funding limited to Superstorm Sandy impacts.

We believe that it is the responsibility of the Administration, after declaring these disasters, to request the funding to respond to them. Until funding is made available for these declarations, the affected fishermen will continue to struggle during a critical time of need. For those that are suffering and the fishing communities they live in, time is of the essence. They simply cannot wait for another funding cycle for help to arrive.

Besides additional funding to respond to the Superstorm Sandy fisheries disaster, we urge you to include funding for the following declared disasters:

- **Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery** – On September 13, 2012, a federal fisheries disaster was declared for Rhode Island, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Connecticut. The projected reductions in the total allowable catch for certain critical groundfish stocks will have a significant impact on many of the same coastal communities that were hit by Sandy. Despite strict adherence to new and rigorous management practices by fishermen, key fish stocks have not returned. Slow recovery and declining fish stocks will continue to have a negative impact on commercial fishing, harming local communities and economies.
- **Alaska Chinook** – On September 12, 2012, a federal fisheries disaster was declared for Alaska Chinook salmon fisheries in the Yukon River, Kuskokwim River, and Cook Inlet. Thousands of Alaskans have been impacted including commercial fishermen, sport fishermen, and subsistence-based residents. Beyond direct impacts, indirect impacts have been felt by communities through reduced tax revenue, reduced work for processor employees, and reduced income for fishery dependent businesses.
- **Mississippi Oyster and Blue Crab** – On September 12, 2012, a federal fisheries disaster was declared for commercial oyster and blue crab fisheries in Mississippi. Historic flooding of the lower Mississippi River required opening of the Bonnet Carré Spillway on May 9, 2011. This action released substantial

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amounts of freshwater into the Mississippi Sound, impacting the entire ecosystem. Mississippi's oyster and blue crab fisheries were extensively damaged, resulting in severe economic hardship for commercial fishermen still recovering from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill.

Thank you for your attention to this request, and we look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Lee Neubauer

Elizabeth Han

Paul Bezek

Will Miller

Paul Cohen

John Stone

Susan Collins

Deanne Shaheen

Ray Winter

Angus King

Chuck Sch

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*Kirsten E. Gillibrand*

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<b>Senator</b>		
Jack Reed		
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Elizabeth Warren		
Mark Begich		
William M. Cowan		
Thad Cochran		
Sheldon Whitehouse		
Susan Collins		
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