



MIDCOAST FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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News Release

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Statement by Glen Libby, President of the Midcoast (Maine) Fishermen's Association, on the Final Interim Rule for Groundfish for the 2009 fishing year released by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

"Today the National Marine Fisheries Service released their final Interim Rule for Groundfish for the 2009 fishing year. After hearing from all stakeholders, including those voices supporting the industry, the final interim rule now strikes a balance between protecting both the ecosystem and the beleaguered fishing industry that depends on those systems.

In press statements today by Jane Lubchenco, head of NOAA, as well as by conservation organizations such as the Pew Environment Group, their messages resonate with that of our community-based fishing organization that the final rule is only the first step to reaching sustainable ecosystems and providing profitability to struggling fishing businesses. It will take us beyond the 2009-fishing year to move towards new management systems based on allocation, such as sectors, to reach both of these goals.

We commend NOAA, the council and others for acknowledging this and reflecting this balance within the final rule. This will now afford all stakeholders the space to transition New England's entire fishery fairly and implement annual catch limits and accountability measures as mandated by Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act for the 2010 fishing year through sector-based management. The Interim Rule is only part of the solution for our fishery and now is the time for the Council, the industry and the conservation community to work together to restore fish stocks, promote profitability to the fishing industry and sustain our historical communities that depend on both for future generations."

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The Midcoast Fishermen's Association identifies and fosters ways to restore our groundfish fishery and sustain fishing communities along Maine's coast for future generations.

<http://www.midcoastfishermen.org>