



## MIDCOAST FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **MIDCOAST MAINE FISHERMEN: "THE FUTURE IS NOW!"**

Glen Libby, chair of the Midcoast Fishermen's Association (MFA), will express his vision for the future of Maine's groundfish fishery at U.S. Senator Olympia J. Snowe's field hearing on the sustainability of Maine's groundfishing industry at 1:00 p.m. today, October 14, at City Hall in Portland, Maine.

Given the success of its Community Supported Fisheries program (CSF), the MFA sees a tremendous opportunity for conservation and positive economic change for Maine's groundfish industry. Sector management, now being promoted by the New England Fishery Management Council, is planned for implementation in time for the 2010-fishing season.

"New England's current management system for groundfish, Days-at-Sea, has been a dismal failure and has yet to meet the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act," declares Libby. "Sector allocation will enhance the ability of fishermen to develop new marketing systems like ours that allow for sustainability of the resource and profitability of community-based fishing businesses. We need a new type of fisheries management now; our families and communities depend on it."

"Currently our market is based on volume," explains Jennifer Litteral, director of marine programs at the Island Institute, a Rockland-based nonprofit that earlier this year received the NOAA Excellence Award for Coastal and Ocean Resource Management. "Fishermen catch higher volumes of fish that flood the market, resulting in lower prices. Because there is not sufficient volume allowed to be taken to ensure economic success, it has forced consolidation of the fishery and depletion of the stocks."

By contrast, the MFA created the first CSF in New England, selling its fish under the brand *Port Clyde Fresh Catch*. The fishermen caught low volumes of high-quality fish and sold it for prices up to 10 times that of the wholesale market. In addition to increasing profits, this model achieves conservation of the resource by reducing the fishing effort. Libby relates another benefit: "Our customers know they are helping to preserve one of Maine's last fishing communities while keeping their dollars at work in our local economy."

Libby adds, "Working within a sector will allow our fishermen to plan their trips as the market demands to ensure that they are getting the best price while enabling fish stocks to rebuild because the race is off." Two sectors are already working successfully in Massachusetts. Sector-management systems create fishing cooperatives that are allocated a portion of the annual catch limit. This enables fishermen to decide how best to fish with their allocation, which provides flexibility and economic opportunities. Litteral comments, "We have to get beyond debating science and move toward implementing new management systems that will benefit Maine's fishing communities. Libby asserts, "The fishermen I work with are determined to rebuild this fishery and leave it in better shape for future generations."

Glen Libby is a lifelong second-generation fisherman from Port Clyde, Maine. He is currently chairman of the Midcoast Fishermen's Association and president of the Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative. Additionally, he serves on the board of the Portland Fish Exchange and on the Maine Marine Resources Advisory Council. To speak with him, please call 207-701-7032 (cell) or 207-372-0628 (home). Visit <http://www.midcoastfishermen.org/linksofinterest.html> for his full testimony.

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