Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2011

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Fourteenth Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Locke:

As you now well know, the New England groundfish fishery is embedded into the cultural fabric of Massachusetts and we are committed to sustaining our unique and iconic fishing industry and the fish stocks on which they depend.

Amendment 16 of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan has been rife with controversy. Course aggregate data show increases in revenues, including in Massachusetts ports, yet, it is abundantly clear that some of our fishermen are suffering economically and it is critically important that we provide them with assistance to ensure a healthy coastal community. We are hopeful that the May implementation of proposed Framework 45, which increases catch limits for twelve stocks, will benefit our fishermen, but clearly help is needed now.

We commend you for your recent announcement to deploy Economic Development and Assessment Teams to assess economic impacts in our New England fishing communities. Similar steps were taken during the Administration's Gulf Recovery Efforts, where we saw how high-level interagency coordination, through the White House Economic Solutions Team (EST), could rapidly organize to design, develop, and implement tangible economic recovery solutions following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, including providing access to capital to small businesses via loan assistance, and developing links to existing business assistance and workforce training programs. We respectfully urge you to take similar steps to coordinate with the Department of Treasury, the Department of Labor, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Small Business Administration, and other appropriate agencies within the Administration to assess and evaluate all options to provide assistance to the fishing communities negatively impacted by the implementation of Amendment 16.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

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Edward J. Markey

EDWARD J. MARKEY

Barney Frank

BARNEY FRANK

John F. Tierney

JOHN F. TIERNEY

William R. Keating

WILLIAM KEATING

cc: The Honorable Tim Geithner, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury
The Honorable Hilda L. Solis, Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor
The Honorable Shaun Donovan, Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
The Honorable Karen G. Mills, Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration