



NOAA

**NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION**
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 16, 2012

Secretary of Commerce declares fisheries disaster for New York and New Jersey

As part of the Administration's focus on providing those affected by Sandy with all available federal support, Acting Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank today announced the determination of a fishery resource disaster to help coastal communities in New Jersey and New York.

Under Section 308(d) of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act and Section 315 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Commerce Secretary can declare a fishery resource disaster and a catastrophic regional fishery disaster, respectively, which allows Congress to appropriate federal relief funds for assistance to alleviate harm resulting from a natural disaster. If money is appropriated, Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will work closely with members of Congress and the governors of impacted states to develop financial assistance plans to help coastal communities and the fishing industry. While this determination will focus on coastal communities in New Jersey and New York, NOAA will continue to work with other states in the region to determine if similar assistance is needed.

"We are taking action because of the storm's devastating impact on the people who live and work in coastal communities that were hit hard by Sandy. Many of these hardworking Americans depend on a robust fishing industry to support their families and local economies," said Acting Secretary Blank. "This disaster declaration is part of a coordinated federal effort to help the region rebuild. The Obama Administration is committed to bringing all available resources to bear to support state and local partners as well as affected communities as recovery continues."

Although the extent of the damage to local commercial and recreational fisheries and coastal infrastructure is not yet known, the cascading economic and social impacts of a storm of this magnitude will likely be extensive. In 2010 alone, New Jersey and New York commercial fisheries landed almost 190 million pounds of fish, valued at more than \$210 million dollars. In the same year, New Jersey and New York recreational fishermen took more than 10 million trips and caught a total of nearly five million fish.

"Communities along the East Coast were ravaged by Sandy's impacts, including the fishing industry, especially in New York and New Jersey. Fishing is the lifeblood of many coastal communities, providing jobs and recreational opportunities for millions and contributing to the food security of the nation," said Dr. Jane Lubchenco, administrator, NOAA. "This disaster declaration is the first step in supporting these industries and communities up and down the East Coast as they continue recovery efforts."

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on Facebook, Twitter and our other social media channels.