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# State of New Hampshire

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OS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

**JOHN H. LYNCH**  
Governor

January 13, 2012

The Honorable John Bryson  
Secretary  
United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Bryson:

The State of New Hampshire is formally requesting disaster assistance for the Northeast Multispecies Fishery in New Hampshire under Section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C § 1861). Recent regulatory decisions have resulted in substantial economic hardship for the New Hampshire commercial fishing industry. The catch-share program and allocation system implemented in Amendment 16 to the Multispecies Fishery Management Plan has caused a dramatic decrease in allocation and harvest of groundfish for members of New Hampshire's fishing community. It has jeopardized their ability to operate their businesses and earn a living, and has endangered the shore-side infrastructure they rely on to conduct business. Additionally, a recently released Department of Commerce report<sup>1</sup> makes clear that New Hampshire's fishing industry has borne a proportionally larger burden of the impacts of Amendment 16. The report demonstrates that there is a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster in New Hampshire. The report further shows that fisheries managers have been unable to mitigate the effects on New Hampshire through regulatory controls. Consequently, I firmly believe that the standard under section 312(a)(1)(B) of the Act for a disaster relief determination is met and the Secretary should make funds available to New Hampshire's fishing industry and community.

This report evaluates the performance of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery using data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Performance Report), and demonstrates how dramatically the New Hampshire fishing industry has been affected by recent management changes. The nominal value of landings of groundfish by New Hampshire-based vessels has diminished from \$7,222,173 in 2008 and \$6,067,623 in 2009 to \$3,692,642 in 2010<sup>2</sup>. This 39 percent decline in one year puts enormous strain not only on the New Hampshire groundfish fishing industry, but on related businesses and on-shore infrastructure as well.

<sup>1</sup> Kitts A, Bing-Sawyer E, Walden J, Demarest C, McPherson M, Christman P, Steinback S, Olson J, Clay P. 2011. 2010 Final Report on the Performance of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery (May 2010 - April 2011). US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 11-19. 97 p.

<sup>2</sup> Table 7 of 2010 Final Report on the Performance of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery (May 2010-April 2011).

The owner's share of landings by New Hampshire-based vessels also declined from \$3,793,838 in 2009 to \$2,781,245 in 2010<sup>3</sup>; a decline of 26.7 percent following the conversion of regulations from days-at-sea management to catch share programs. The number of vessels generating revenue from groundfish harvest declined from 43 in 2009 to 32 in 2010<sup>4</sup>. This decline in the size of New Hampshire's fishing fleet resulted in a decline in employment in the fishing industry, as both total crew positions and total crew trips declined from 2009 to 2010<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally, critical infrastructure support services, such as shore-based facilities, have been significantly affected by the decline in groundfish harvest that followed the change in management under Amendment 16. An example is the Yankee Fishermen's Cooperative, which is New Hampshire's only resident dockside support that meets the needs of the New Hampshire fishing community. The Yankee Fishermen's Cooperative experienced a 55 percent reduction in groundfish product between 2009 and 2010 (Figure 1). This mirrors the statewide reduction in groundfish landings and is further evidence of the economic hardship and declining trend the New Hampshire commercial fishing industry is experiencing.

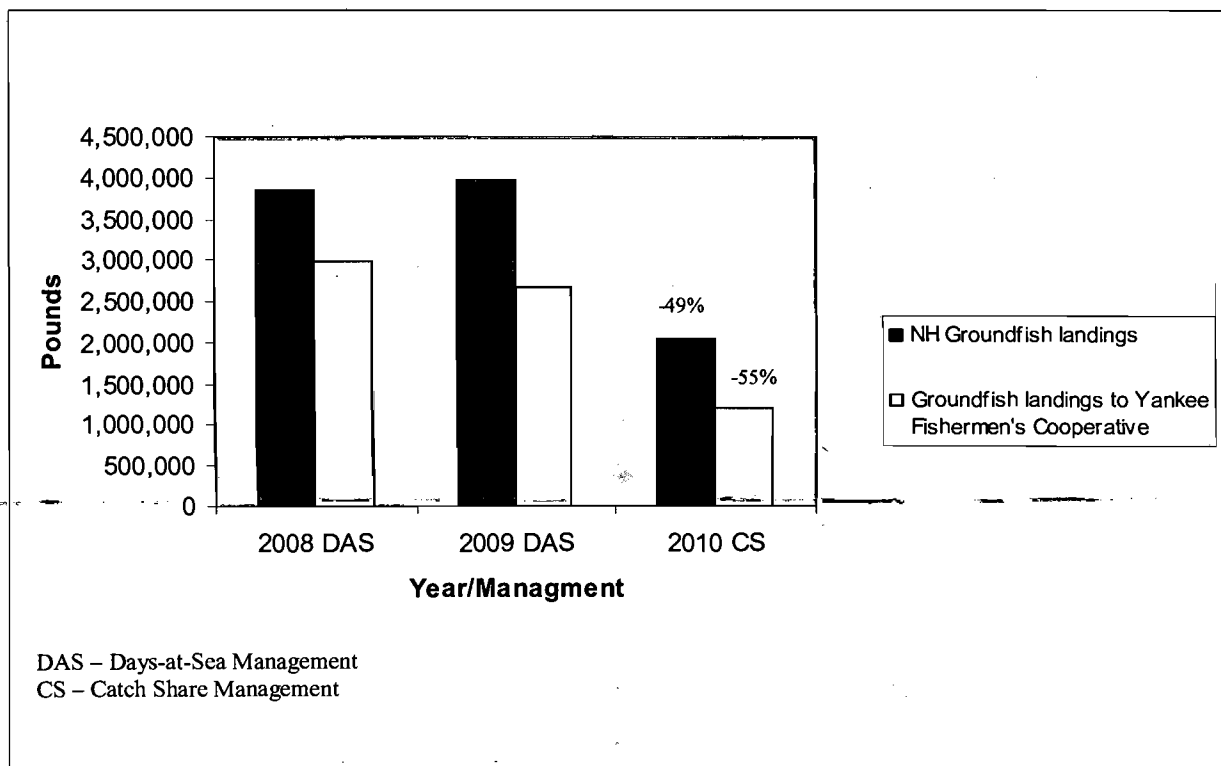


Figure 1. New Hampshire Groundfish Landings, 2008-2010 Fishing Years.

<sup>3</sup> Table 19 of 2010 Final Report on the Performance of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery (May 2010-April 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Table 32 of 2010 Final Report on the Performance of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery (May 2010-April 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Table 44 of 2010 Final Report on the Performance of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery (May 2010-April 2011).

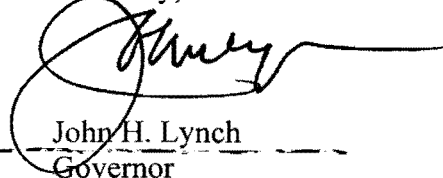
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New Hampshire was the only state from Maine to New Jersey that showed a decrease in the nominal value of landings of all species as well as the aggregate owners' shares between 2009 and 2010<sup>6</sup> following the implementation of Amendment 16. This clearly demonstrates that the mitigation of the impacts on New Hampshire by the provisions of Amendment 16 has not been successful and as a result, we are experiencing a fishery resource disaster caused by the Amendment 16 regulatory measures. In addition, this is further evidence that the small vessel commercial fishing community in New Hampshire, which has limited range, continues to suffer gravely compared to other states under the current management structure for groundfish. The economic pressure and insecurity that results from this management system which management measures are not able to mitigate and control threatens this traditional fishery and community, which has been in existence for centuries, with extinction.

All of this evidence supports the conclusion that New Hampshire's fishing industry suffers severe adverse impacts by recent regulatory decisions. While fishermen in other states are seeing revenues remain steady or even increase, the New Hampshire fishing community is losing revenue, and as a result, vessels are going out of business, jobs are disappearing, and infrastructure is being compromised. I ask that you take steps to more fully assess the situation and declare a fisheries disaster under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Marine Fisheries Division, is ready and able to assist you if you need specific information about the fishing industry in our state. Please feel free to contact Douglas Grout, Chief of Marine Fisheries, at (603) 868-1095 or [douglas.grout@wildlife.nh.gov](mailto:douglas.grout@wildlife.nh.gov) if you need any information from the Department. If there is anything I can do to be helpful in this process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



John H. Lynch  
Governor

cc: Jane Lubchenco, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Eric Schwaab, Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service  
Patricia Kurkul, Northeast Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service  
Senator Jeanne Shaheen  
Senator Kelly Ayotte  
Representative Frank Guinta

<sup>6</sup> Tables 4, 5, and 19 of 2010 Final Report on the Performance of the Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Fishery (May 2010-April 2011).