



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

SENATE MINORITY LEADER

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

SENATOR BRUCE E. TARR
1ST ESSEX AND MIDDLESEX
ROOM 308
(617) 722-1600

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**CONTACT: Troy Wall or
Michael Smith**
Senator Tarr's office
617-722-1600
troy.wall@masenate.gov
michael.smith@masenate.gov

MA Senate approves funding to assist groundfishing industry *State to develop plan to save fishing vessels, families and ports*

BOSTON – The Massachusetts State Senate has approved a \$50,000 appropriation for the state's Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) to develop a plan to prevent the collapse of the Commonwealth's groundfishing industry.

Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester), Assistant Majority Whip Mark C. Montigny (D-New Bedford) and Assistant Minority Leader Robert L. Hedlund (R-Weymouth) secured the funding by amending a \$94.6 million supplemental budget bill debated in the Senate Thursday afternoon. The House must still approve the language and funding before it can be sent to the Governor for his signature.

“Our commercial groundfishing industry is on the verge of extinction,” said Senator Tarr. “With no relief in sight, Massachusetts needs to develop a plan to keep vessels, permits and catch allocations from leaving the state, and to act on that plan as soon as possible.”

The Senate amendment calls on the DMF to conduct at least three public hearings around the state in geographically diverse coastal commercial fishing ports. It also directs the DMF to consider a variety of strategies to help the industry cope with reduced catch shares under new federal regulations that went into effect May 1, including but not limited to:

- direct grants to commercial fishing vessel owners and crews;
- the purchase, lease and banking of commercial groundfish permits and/or catch quota, loans, guarantees and subsidies;
- the lease of commercial fishing vessels for research and other academic purposes; and
- other mechanisms to prevent the extinction or outmigration of commercial groundfish capacity and allowable catch of commercial groundfish from the Commonwealth.

The Senate amendment requires the DMF to submit its plan, including cost estimates and any proposed legislative or regulatory actions needed, to the clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate by December 31, 2013.

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