

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 21, 2013

Mr. Russell Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C., 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Smith:

The management of U.S. fisheries for bluefin tuna is currently the subject of a comprehensive domestic rulemaking that will have profound implications for many US fishermen. This proposed revision has been triggered by the progressive reduction in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) total allowable catch (TAC) for the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock over the past decade. Consequently, the U.S. allocation of this stock may be insufficient to sustain our traditional and valuable U.S. fisheries in any given year.


We are aware that the interpretation and application of scientific advice has been the subject of considerable debate within the ICCAT scientific community and among other nations fishing on the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock. Much of this debate centers on the choice managers must make between the so-called "low" and "high" recruitment scenarios which relate to the relationship between the estimated size of the spawning stock and annual levels of reproduction. The upcoming ICCAT inter-sessional meeting in Montreal, Canada presents a substantial opportunity for the U.S. and other ICCAT nations to collectively resolve the "high-low" recruitment issue and make progress on other critical scientific and management issues. We hope you will take full advantage of this opportunity as the Head of our U.S. Delegation.

Our fishermen and associated shoreside businesses are facing some of the most difficult times in history - an era characterized by fishery disaster declarations and widespread economic hardship in many fishery-dependent communities. Fortunately, as with our domestic policies, the U.S. has considerable flexibility in pursuing a balance between conservation objectives and the need to sustain U.S. small businesses and employment in our fisheries through the ICCAT process. Much of this flexibility lies within the interpretation of the scientific advice.

With this and our current domestic bluefin management challenges in mind, we urge you to advance U.S. positions at the ICCAT inter-sessional and annual meetings that will achieve these dual policy objectives in a manner that is most favorable to U.S. interests. Specifically, we ask you to pursue all possible means to secure an increase in the TAC for the western Atlantic bluefin tuna stock within the range of ICCAT scientific advice.

We wish you great success in your negotiations and thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



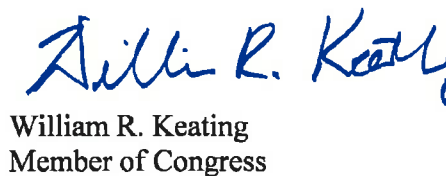
Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Senator



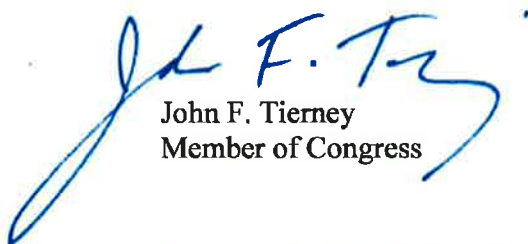
William "Mo" Cowan
U.S. Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senator



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress



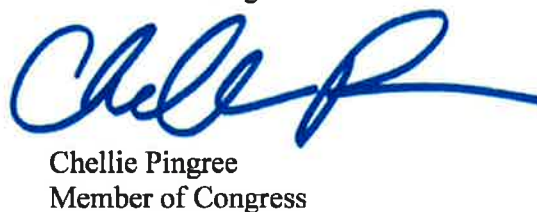
Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



Jon Runyan
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
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