

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:

APPROPRIATIONS

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND  
TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENT AND  
PUBLIC WORKS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 13, 2012

The Honorable Rebecca Blank  
Acting Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Acting Secretary Blank:

I write in support of Governor Christie's request that you declare a federal fishery resources disaster for New Jersey. The unprecedented damage from Superstorm Sandy has taken a severe toll on New Jersey's fishing industry and marine resources. I ask that you act expeditiously to declare a federal fishery resource disaster in the state and take all necessary steps and determinations to assess the impact caused by the storm.

New Jersey's fishing industry is an important cultural and economic force in our state. The waters off New Jersey produce more than 100 varieties of finfish and shellfish, most of which are brought ashore at one of the state's six major ports. In 2011, New Jersey fishermen landed more than 175 million pounds of seafood. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this supports more than 40,000 jobs, including processors, distributors, retail sales, and some 2,000 commercial fishermen. Beyond the commercial fishing industry, an estimated 500,000 recreational anglers fish New Jersey's waters annually, generating tourism dollars and supporting our coastal economy.

Superstorm Sandy has had far-reaching implications on the state's fishing industry and the economic impact will be felt in both the short-term and long-term. Declaring a federal fishery resources disaster for the state is a critical step to the economic redevelopment that will be necessary in the coming months to reestablish this significant part of the state's economy and culture.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request. I urge you to declare the disaster and initiate all actions required to bring assistance to New Jersey's fishing industry as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

