

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2007

The Honorable Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Administrator
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Herbert C. Hoover Building
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable William T. Hogarth
Director
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Admiral Lautenbacher and Director Hogarth:

We are writing to urge the continuation of funding in Fiscal Year 2007 for the School of Marine Science and Technology (SMAST), and the Massachusetts Fisheries Institute (MFI) for critical fisheries and scallop stock assessment work affecting the New England fishery. As you are aware, both institutions have received consistent funding over the course of the last several years. Their contributions have provided a better understanding of New England fisheries and, for that reason, we urge you to continue funding them at the same level they received in FY 2006. Accordingly, we hope NOAA will consider providing \$3 million for SMAST multi-species surveys, and \$1.8 million for scallop stock surveys performed by MFI with funding from the Continuing Resolution.

SMAST has undertaken a series of valuable groundfish surveys, and technologically innovative approaches to stock assessment, bycatch reduction and other key fishery management challenges. Recently, SMAST began work to address a shell-disease syndrome in the lobster fishery. The analytical support generated by SMAST needs continued funding to address the remaining work..

SMAST research on the cod fishery has also proven to be critical to the management and regulation of much of the New England fishery, and its discontinuation or disruption will negatively impact both past and future research efforts. Again, we urge that a total of \$3 million be provided for this purpose.

MFI is a state collaborative program that operates in association with university and government researchers. MFI has performed a range of vital stock assessments and management recommendations on scallop populations with its previous funding. This work provides spatially resolved estimates of scallop abundance, growth, and mortality. Its termination would undermine the collection of data needed for proper resource management. The continued scallop stock assessment is particularly important to New

Bedford, the nation's highest grossing fishing port and a city that already suffers from high rates of poverty and unemployment.

MFI's work also includes the development of a state-of-the-art oceanographic model, and MFI's unique capability to optically sample the ocean bottom is essential to rationalizing the use of habitat information for conservation management and forecasting catch limits. With the full funding of \$1.8 million, MFI will be able to continue its important work without serious setbacks.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. We appreciate your commitment to working with us on behalf of the New England fishery and your concern for the health of our fishing communities. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about these requests.

Sincerely,

Bob Kennedy

Jim F. Kerry

Banyrank



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

APR 19 2007

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear. Senator Kerry:

Thank you for your cosigned letter regarding your concerns about 2007 funding levels for the School of Marine Science and Technology and the Massachusetts Fisheries Institute for critical fisheries and scallop stock assessment work. We value our partnership with the School of Marine Science Technology and the Massachusetts Fisheries Institute, and their support of our mission-related efforts.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has finalized the spend plan for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, which includes funding for stock assessment activities. Under this plan, NOAA allows research institutes such as the School of Marine Science and Technology and the Massachusetts Fisheries Institute to make unsolicited proposals for funding. Information on the competitive bid process is contained in the recently-released Broad Area Announcement (BAA). For further information on the BAA and the grant process, please contact Anne Barrett, Deputy Chief Financial Officer for NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, at (301) 713-2259.

We look forward to working with you to advance NOAA's mission nationwide, as well as in Massachusetts in FY 2007. Thank you for your continued support of NOAA's programs.

Sincerely,

Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere



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THE ADMINISTRATOR





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

APR 19 2007

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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