



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
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September 14, 2017

Dr. John Quinn, Chairman
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street,
Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950

Re: Scallop Sector Proposal from East Coast

Dear Dr. Quinn, *John*

I am writing to express my concern about the consideration and possible implementation of a proposal initiated to the Council by the East Coast Scallop Harvest Association. I write as a state legislator whose district includes communities on both sides of the Port of New Bedford. I have some familiarity with commercial fishing issues including those affecting the Atlantic Sea Scallop. I also serve presently as a member of the Council's Enforcement Advisory Committee.

The notion of sector style management within specific fisheries is not new to our region. I have watched with dismay the impact of this concept upon the New England groundfish industry. Markets have been disrupted under the current groundfish sector management system; in addition, perverse incentives were created which, in my view, have worked against the public's interests with little or no benefit to the natural resources whose sound management, commercial harvesters depend upon. It would be a mistake to give this proposal priority consideration at this time.

I believe that the scallop fishery is a successful one right now. It is sustainable in terms of the resource itself, and for the participants who are involved on the water and in the processing/distribution sector. As I understand the East Coast proposal, a dramatic change in ownership, management and working relationships would be guaranteed to occur. To say that little is known or understood about the consequences of this proposal would be an understatement. While no doubt certain permit holders could realize a

benefit, it remains unclear whether the broader interest of the public and the other permit holders would be well served. It is not an exaggeration (given what we have seen with the resulting consolidation in the New England groundfish sector) that similar disruptions could occur with regard to scallops.

I believe as a result that the Council should not give the sector management proposal any priority and that it not be included in future Amendment or Framework discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Straus', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William M. Straus
State Representative