

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 2, 2002

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings  
Chairman  
Senate Commerce Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere,  
and Fisheries  
Senate Commerce Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere,  
and Fisheries  
Senate Commerce Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Hollings, McCain, Kerry and Snowe:

We are writing to express our concerns about the status of the moratorium on Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) programs, which expired on September 30, 2002. As you are aware, there is strong support in our respective regions for Fisheries Management Councils to be able to rely on IFQs to manage some fisheries. As a result, we oppose any effort to extend the moratorium nationwide.

We greatly appreciate the time and effort you and your staff have devoted to crafting national standards for IFQ programs. Given the regional nature of fisheries, evidenced by significant differences in fisheries resources, industries, communities and management practices, we recognize that developing national standards for quota programs is no simple task. Your staff have listened carefully to all sides of this debate and are working tirelessly to reach common ground. We thank you and your staff for this commitment to developing fair, effective national standards. While we remain hopeful that we may be able to reach consensus before the close of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, we believe that any national IFQ standards should be tailored to address regional differences, and flexibility must be given to the Councils to manage fisheries.

That said, significant differences remain regarding various aspects of national standards for IFQs. Given the limited time and uncertainty surrounding the remaining days of this Congress, we recognize the likelihood that Congress may not pass national standards before it adjourns. In this case, we understand that you may consider extending the moratorium for another year or two, or until the Magnuson-Stevens Act is reauthorized.

If you decide to extend the moratorium, then we will insist that the North Pacific, Gulf and Pacific Councils be exempted from the moratorium on new IFQ programs. The Magnuson-Stevens Act currently contains multiple standards which apply specifically to IFQ programs, in addition to the national standards for fishery management and conservation and the standards for fishery management plans. We believe these standards provide sufficient guidance to Councils in developing IFQ programs until new IFQ standards can be incorporated into reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

While Councils certainly should not be required to adopt fisheries management plans that include IFQ programs, regions should have the flexibility and freedom to rely on this management tool. As you know, all eight Councils have asked Congress to lift the moratorium, and the National Academy of Science's study *Sharing the Fish* made the same recommendation. Given that our nation is currently facing many crises in our fisheries, we must allow Councils access to as many different types of solutions as possible.

Thank you again for all of your hard work to finalize national standards for IFQs during the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is our sincere hope that we shall be able to work together and succeed in accomplishing this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Patty Murray

Ch. B. Smith

John P. Breaux

Marie Cantwell

Tom Bailey Futchison

W. J. Ford

Richard Shelby

Bob Costello

Jeff Sessions

Bill Nelson

R. W. Wagon

