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Congressman Lee M. Zeldin **First Congressional District of New York**

July 15, 2016

Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan
Acting Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Mr. John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator -Greater Atlantic Region
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Dear Administrator Sullivan and Mr. Bullard:

On behalf of the hardworking commercial fishermen in the 1st Congressional District of New York, I urge you to immediately reconsider your proposed emergency closure of the Atlantic bluefish fishery. It is imperative that this rule not be issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service in its current form and that your agency pursue immediate alternative steps to protect this important fishery that do not harm commercial fishermen on Long Island.

It is of great concern that reliance upon old and flawed data, and the use of scientific methods that are extremely outdated, have influenced this pending decision that will have a serious impact on Long Island's economy. I urge the National Marine Fisheries Service to reassess the reliability of their data in light of a more comprehensive set of Vessel Trip Recorder (VTR) data that has been submitted to your agency by the New York State Department of Environment Conservation. NFMS should not make any final decisions regarding Atlantic bluefish until New York State's alternative data is taken into consideration, and until data produced by the Marine Recreation Information Program (MRIP) undergoes a thorough review.

NOAA must also take immediate action that gives the states more ability to manage this and other fisheries in a flexible, locally focused way. This includes allowing state and regional managers to borrow quota from future years so that questionable emergency closures can be avoided.

Keeping the Atlantic bluefish fishery open for commercial and recreational access this season and addressing the overall management and data issues impacting this important stock is one of my top priorities. Please respond to this inquiry immediately and keep my office abreast of any updates on this pending ruling. Should you have any further questions or concerns, please contact Kevin Dowling in my Washington office at 202-650-7198 or kevin.dowling@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Zeldin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lee Zeldin- 1st Congressional District of New York

cc: Congressman Rob Bishop, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
Robert Beal, ASMFC Executive Director