

March 12, 2011

Mr. Rip Cunningham, Chair
Groundfish Committee
New England Fisheries Management Council

Dear Mr. Cunningham,

My name is Phil Karlin. I've been a small-scale Commercial Fishermen for over 40 years, in multiple fisheries, based out of Mattituck, NY.

I am pleased to know that the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) voted to make Fleet Diversity a priority and is now considering tools to achieve a more diverse fleet. As the Council explores safeguards like accumulation caps I urge you to keep in mind the Surf Clam Ocean Quahog fishery.

I have witnessed first hand the "excessive consolidation" of various fisheries and can say that it is most definitely one of those disastrous changes that allows big money operations to eat up and buy out the independently owned small family business at the expense of our local communities as well as the conservation of our oceans.

In my experience, I have seen this happen with the consolidation of the NY State inshore Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Fishery that has allowed the industry to pretty much become a monopoly. This has made it near impossible for a small business fisherman to enter or even re-enter the fishery. I urge the New England fisheries managers not to make the same mistakes.

With safeguards in place like accumulation caps we could have prevented monopolizing our industry. We could have protected our community-based fishermen along with our local infrastructure. Instead we now have the resource owned and controlled by a few who care more about profit than about community and our oceans.

Again, I recommend that you learn from our Surf Clam/Ocean Quahog fishery and the mistakes that were made. Create safeguards before its too late.

Sincerely,
Phil Karlin