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CHRIS CHRISTIE
GOVERNOR

November 13, 2012

The Honorable Rebecca Blank
Acting Secretary of Commerce and Deputy Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Acting Secretary Blank:

As you know, beginning on October 28, 2012, and continuing through October 30, 2012, Sandy struck the State of New Jersey, destroying entire communities across New Jersey and leaving much of the State – particularly our coastal areas – badly damaged and inaccessible. This unprecedented storm caused substantial damage throughout the State and had a significant adverse impact on New Jersey's fishing industry. In light of that damage and the adverse impacts on the fishing industry occasioned by Sandy, I write to respectfully request that you declare a federal fishery resources disaster as outlined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1864, and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, 16 U.S.C. § 4107, as well as relevant clauses to trigger support from the Economic Development Administration.

New Jersey's fishing industry is not only a defining element of the Jersey Shore and a crucial tourism draw, but is also vital and essential component of New Jersey's coastal economy and invaluable recreational activity. Indeed, New Jersey's fishing industry provides jobs for fishermen, fish processors, and related maritime support industries, among others. In 2011, New Jersey's commercial fishing industry landed roughly 175 million pounds of seafood, generating over $1.3 billion of economic activity. Similarly, the economic impact of recreational fishing is significant, supporting, according to industry, approximately 8,500 jobs and $1.4 billion in annual sales.

The severity and magnitude of Sandy has led to a materially decreased and markedly weakened fishing industry in New Jersey. I have personally seen significant damage and destruction suffered by the industry, including losses to offices, warehouses, vessels, shellfish aquaculture facilities, and equipment. Moreover, given Sandy's impacts on public safety, infrastructure, and utility delivery, some impacted groups have lost access to coastal areas. Moreover, due to water quality issues, shellfish harvesting has already been suspended for two weeks, with further suspension likely.

The revenue loss for New Jersey's fishing industry is – both now and in the future – patent. Significant infrastructure and economic redevelopment will be needed to revive this badly damaged industry. For this reason, a federal catastrophic regional fishery disaster declaration and assistance via a

regional economic transition program is appropriate. Such a declaration for New Jersey will assist in obtaining immediate disaster relief assistance for all negatively impacted and eligible fishermen, charter fishing operators, United States fish processors, and owners of related fishery infrastructure affected by the disaster.

Thank you for your kind consideration of these circumstances and this request. I have designated Commissioner Bob Martin of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to act on my behalf regarding this matter and will provide you with any additional information that you may require. He can be reached at (609-777-4327) or bob.martin@dep.state.nj.us.

Sincerely,

Chris Christie
Governor

c: Bob Martin, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection