

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2005

The Honorable Hector V. Barreto
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Barreto:

As you may be aware, Massachusetts waters are being plagued by the worst outbreak of red tide since 1972. We are writing to urge you to issue an economic injury disaster declaration for Essex, Plymouth, Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes and Nantucket counties in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of the thousands of fishermen and their families who have been affected by the closure of shellfish beds due to red tide. This outbreak has resulted in the closure of most shellfish areas in Massachusetts, devastating approximately 1,700 shellfish fishermen.

This disaster could not come at a worse possible time. Many of our fishermen provide shellfish to businesses on our coast that cater to tourists seeking local seafood during the summer months. The levels of toxicity from this red tide outbreak have been escalating in recent weeks. Local officials currently estimate that many shellfish beds will be closed for most of the summer months. The fishermen and other small businesses affected by the red tide disaster are an important part of the economic and cultural history of Massachusetts' coastal communities. Emergency assistance for the shellfish industry is important for the continued growth of the Massachusetts economy.


This disaster will have an extraordinary impact on our fishermen and their families who depend upon seasonal income to survive year-round. It will also affect the profitability of many other small businesses, specifically restaurants, which cater to tourists during the summer months. We believe these fishermen deserve access to low-interest SBA loans to assist them through the disaster recovery period.

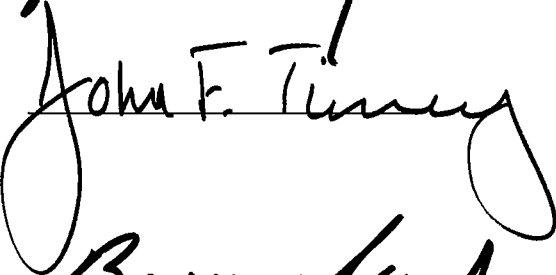
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We hope that you will make this declaration immediately so our fishermen are eligible to apply for low-interest economic injury disaster loans from the SBA to help their businesses survive the red tide disaster.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

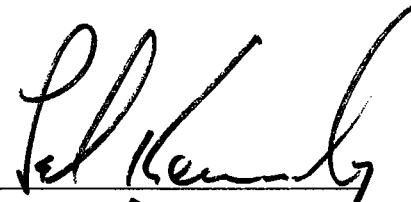
Sincerely,

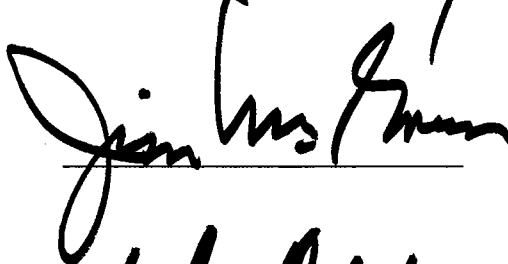



John F. Kerry


John F. Timmer


Barney Frank



Pat Kennedy


Jim Gusman


Mike DeLoe