

November 8, 2002

V ADM Conrad Lautenbacher Jr., US Navy Retired
Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans & Atmosphere
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th & Constitution Avenue, NW
Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Admiral Lautenbacher:

The Office of Advocacy commends the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) decision to ask Judge Kessler for a delay in the implementation of the New England groundfish fishing regulations.

My office oversees government compliance with laws mandating agency analysis of how regulations will impact small business. The additional time will allow for a more thorough assessment of the fish stock, which is imperative for determining the appropriate course of action to protect the species and the fishing industry. We hope that the additional time will also allow New England and federal officials to document how any new rules will affect small business, which makes up 99% of the fishing industry.

If the Office Advocacy can assist you in this important endeavor, please do not hesitate to contact us at (202) 205-6533.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Sullivan
Chief Counsel for Advocacy

Barbara Manning
Regional Advocate, Region I

Jennifer A. Smith
Assistant Chief Counsel for Economic Regulation

Cc: Michael L. Barrera, National Ombudsman, U.S. Small Business Administration
William Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS