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Statement from Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA Administrator

NOAA defrays observer costs and commits to more stakeholder involvement in reforms

"I heard the concerns expressed by local fishermen and Members of Congress, and today I am immediately announcing two actions to help improve management of New England groundfish and ease the economic burden of the fishery's observer program.

"We want to assure fishermen that NOAA will continue to fund the cost of at-sea monitoring for New England groundfish through April 30, 2013, the end of the 2012 fishing year. While the budget for fiscal year 2012 is still uncertain, we are committed to securing this funding.

"What I heard in Boston confirms what we're seeing in the economic information gathered to date, and I intend to act on that new information. It's clear that fishermen are not yet able to assume at-sea monitoring costs.

"In addition, hearing participants also asked for more robust follow up and stakeholder involvement in the reforms coming out of the independent management review released in April. In response, NOAA will contract with an independent group to initiate a participatory evaluation process of the management reforms underway. As a result of the management review, NOAA has been working to improve science collaboration with state and private research institutions, enhance data management systems to assist the fishing industry with more timely and accurate information, and strengthen outreach and communications.

"While much work remains to sustain the groundfish fishery and the economic health of the fishing industry, ending overfishing and rebuilding stocks is already yielding increases in catch limits for many groundfish stocks.

"Simplifying regulations, giving fishermen more control over their operations, and working together on management improvements will complement rebuilding and improve business prospects across the region. We want to be a partner in the success of fishermen, to sustain fishing jobs, to create a profitable and healthy future for fishing communities and to maintain healthy marine fisheries."

Other Measures

In addition, NOAA will post the job recruitment announcements this week for the director of the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office in Gloucester, Mass., and the director of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Mass. To help find the best possible candidates, we will work to ensure that fishing industry and community leaders identify potential applicants for these key regional leadership positions. NOAA will include an outside panelist on interview panels and has asked the New England Fishery Management Council, the states and other stakeholders to help recruit candidates.

The job recruitment announcements for the director of the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office and the director of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will be posted on the Federal Government's online jobs portal, <http://www.usajobs.gov>.

Finally, NOAA managers are eagerly anticipating the results of the Sector Management Lessons Learned Workshop the New England Council is holding in Portland, Maine on October 25-26. Feedback from that workshop will help NOAA develop a series of regulatory and non-regulatory reforms to further improve management of the groundfish fishery. NOAA will bring these improvements to the Council for review and action at its November meeting.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).