



**Joint Statement by
NOAA Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, Samuel Rauch
New England Fishery Management Council Chair, C.W. Cunningham
in response to Council recommendations on Gulf of Maine Cod
*February 1, 2012***

“Early on, given the unexpected nature of the stock assessment results and the potential implications, NOAA and the New England Fishery Management Council committed to work together to aggressively evaluate the science, develop management responses, and take action to help fishermen and fishing communities. We appreciate the suggestions and ideas we’ve heard from industry members and other stakeholders during the working group meeting in December and during the various conversations we’ve had over the past two months. Today’s Council discussions were informed by this collective input. To provide stakeholders further opportunity to give us feedback on the recommendations made today by the Council, we will be holding a second working group meeting in Portsmouth on February 10. We want to thank everyone for the extraordinary steps taken that will enable us to work well beyond the default catch limit of approximately 1,000 metric tons. Both NOAA and the Council recognize the devastating impact this would have on fishermen and fishing communities and we are committed to looking for a different way forward.”