

## **CAPE COD COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN SUPPORT INTERIM RULE**

### **RULE IS VIABLE COMPROMISE; WILL GIVE STRUGGLING FISHERMEN A CHANCE**

**NORTH CHATHAM, MA-** The Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association (CCCHFA) hailed the 2009 Interim Rule issued today by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as a viable compromise that clears the way for positive change in federal fisheries management. The measure, informed by recommendations from the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), will provide a much-needed bridge during the ongoing transition of the region's fisheries away from the failed days-at-sea system to a system based on sustainable community cooperatives, known as Sectors.

"I'm very pleased with the compromise that NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service have developed," said Peter Taylor, a Chatham hook fisherman and President of the CCCHFA Board of Directors. "Everyone knew the Interim Rule was going to hurt. But it seems that after listening to the response from fishermen and the public, the new leadership at NOAA has published a final Interim Rule that's a huge improvement over what they had originally proposed."

The rule will severely impact fishermen by reducing the total allowable catch for cod; cutting almost 20% of available days-at-sea for fishermen; and further restricting fishing effort in the Great South Channel (traditionally productive fishing grounds southeast of Cape Cod).

"These rules will make it harder for me to earn a living on the water- at least in the short term," second-generation Chatham fisherman John Our said.

However, the revised rule will also provide relief for some fishermen with the expansion of the Closed Area I Hook Gear Haddock Special Access Program (SAP). This SAP allows fishermen to target a healthy haddock resource while avoiding the struggling codfish population in an area traditionally closed to groundfishing. The condition is that they agree to use hook gear and to take additional federal observers. The expansion will turn the three month fishery into a nine month fishery, and nearly triple the size of the area fishermen can access.

"The SAP expansion will do a lot to help the region's fishermen, who will have a hard time making ends meet this year given the dismal economy and the tighter restrictions under the 2009 Interim Rule," said Taylor.

For more than a decade, CCCHFA has been at the forefront of innovative fisheries management. CCCHFA developed the concept of Sectors to balance sustainability and conservation with economic viability and has since established the region's first and only Sectors. Based on the success of CCCHFA's Sector initiative, 17 more Sectors representing the vast majority of groundfish fishermen in New England were proposed in an amendment to the multispecies management plan, which will be up for a final vote this summer. CCCHFA's vision for 2010 also includes a robust monitoring

a final vote this summer. CCCHFA's vision for 2010 also includes a robust monitoring system, which will add more transparency and accountability to the region's fisheries.

"Though the interim rule still represents an enormous economic hardship for the already-struggling fishermen in our communities, we understand that the development and approval of an interim rule was a difficult task for everyone involved," said Susan Nickerson, Executive Director of CCCHFA.

"We remain committed to working with NMFS and the NEFMC, along with others, to establish a system for 2010 and beyond that will rebuild fish populations and ensure a future for the region's small-boat fishing fleet and traditional fishing communities. Sectors are a solution to the problems that plague our fisheries, and their expansion under the NEFMC amendment will spell relief for fishermen."

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### **Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association**

CCCHFA is a member based, non-profit organization actively campaigning for a healthy marine environment that supports a secure and viable future for sustainable commercial fisheries. We educate, support, and empower the fishing industry and the public to effect policy changes that integrate the environment, social, and economic issues.

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