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PRESS RELEASE

Fixed Gear Sector Supports Government's Decision to Fund Monitoring until April 30, 2013

(Chatham, Mass...October 20, 2011) Despite the 15-foot seas and 35 knot winds pounding the shore near the Chatham Fish Pier, local fishermen are in good spirits today on the heels of a critical decision announced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) last night.

At 5:05 p.m. yesterday, a statement issued by NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco announced that "NOAA will continue to fund the cost of at-sea monitoring for New England groundfish through April 30, 2013."

Fixed Gear Sector members breathed a collective sigh of relief.

The sector's president **Mike Russo** announced, "This decision ensures that we [the Fixed Gear Sector] will be able to fish next year. Without it, we may have had to close up shop. Having NOAA fund this program is the right thing to do."

"These fishermen have made it clear to government administrators and fishery managers that requiring industry to pay for monitors next year is a non-starter," said sector manager **Eric Brazer**. "There simply isn't enough profitability in the sector to pay the estimated \$225,000+ bill they'd be saddled with. We thank NOAA for reading their letters and listening to their concerns, and we look forward to working with NOAA and the New England Fishery Management Council to develop a long-term, accountable and affordable monitoring program."

John Tuttle, a Chatham gillnet and hook fisherman, added, "This is huge. It means the difference between fishing and not fishing. It gives us a chance to run a stable business next year and to figure out how to plan for the future. I'm still concerned about having to pay in 2013, but now we have some time to work on this."

"This is great," said sector member **Nick O'Toole**, one of the last remaining full-time **handline fishermen** in the sector. "There's no way we could've afforded to pay for monitors next year."

Mike Woods, who entered the fishery and the sector as a **new captain in 2011**, stated, "It's good to know that my first year won't also be my last."

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