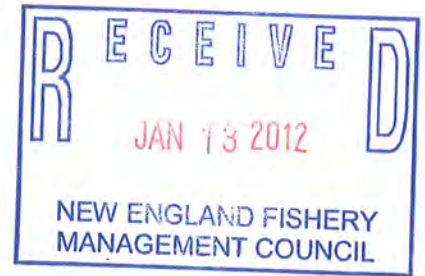


Captain David Waldrip  
Charter Fishing Vessel RELENTLESS  
80 Green Street  
Rockland, MA 02370



Mr. Paul Howard  
Executive Director, NEFMC  
50 Water Street, Mill 2  
Newburyport, MA  
01950

Dear Mr. Howard:

I am writing to you as the owner and operator of the Charter Fishing Vessel RELENTLESS fishing out of Green Harbor, Massachusetts which conducts charters for Northeast Multi Species, primarily codfish in the Gulf of Maine (GOM). I am very alarmed by the latest results of the stock analysis regarding the Gulf of Maine cod stock assessment and find it hard to believe the low biomass estimates. I feel that the possible stringent measures including additional seasonal closures, size limit increases, bag limits and a closure to the Western Gulf of Maine closed area will have a detrimental effect on the Charter and Party Boat industry.

Charter and party boats along with recreational anglers have been abiding by strict regulations making sacrifices with a ten fish bag limit imposed through Amendment 13 to the Northeast Multispecies Management Plan in 2003. Additional measures were put into place severely affecting our opportunity to make a living during 2006 when the minimum size of GOM codfish was increased from 22" to 24" and a closed season on GOM cod was instituted from April 1<sup>st</sup> - Nov 1<sup>st</sup> reducing the charter/party cod fishing season by forty two percent. In 2009 this seasonal closure was increased by action put in place under Framework 42 by increasing the closed season on codfish for charter party vessels during the first fifteen days in April.

I read the Groundfish Plan Development Team's letter to the Groundfish Oversight Committee dated January 12<sup>th</sup>. In this letter some of the recreational measures suggested included reducing the daily bag limit for GOM cod to five fish per angler and reducing the minimum size to nineteen inches. Also mentioned was closing the entire Western Gulf of Maine to all groundfishing. By closing the Western GOM to all groundfishing it will eliminate the chance for recreational anglers to fish for other species such as pollock, redfish, cusk, haddock and other species in the deeper water. Once the middle of June arrives there are no groundfish in the shallower water which is less than 240'. The NEFMC will be doing an injustice by not allowing anglers to have a reasonable chance to fish for other multi species by rod and reel. Both of these actions would cause severe impacts to the charter party industry which is already prohibited from retaining GOM codfish for five and a half months. Anglers will not travel and fish for GOM cod with a

*cc: tn, ah, etc.*

very low bag limit, it is a meat fishery where anglers HOPE to have a banner day after traveling from as far away as MD, PA, OH and other areas of the country. Without a bag limit of ten cod per person, anglers will not fish with charter or party boats that are home ported north of Cape Cod. We are already at the end of our line with the financial constraints due to the closed seasons and any additional reductions or restrictions. This is will result in the end of a traditional fishery which allows anglers to enjoy the day on the water and go home with reasonable amounts of fillets for friends and family members.

The charter party industry urges you to investigate all possible options to allow for the extension date of the rebuilding period of the GOM cod fish stocks. Without an extension, it will be the last straw for many hard working fishermen who have sacrificed over the years doing their part to help rebuild the GOM cod stocks. They have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in vessels, safety gear, tackle, maintenance and advertising over the years. If restrictions are so severe and the government distributes emergency funding to those effected we demand that we are included in the process and receive funding equal in percentage to our allocation of GOM cod.

In summary I greatly appreciate your time and look forward to working with you and the members of your staff in fabricating a solution which will allow the charter party industry to continue in a traditional fishery in the GOM for codfish and other species which will still attract anglers. If you have any questions please contact me anytime at the above number or email at [captdave@relentlesscharters.com](mailto:captdave@relentlesscharters.com)

Sincerely,

  
Captain David Waldrip

Copy: United States Senator, John Kerry  
United States Senator, Scott Brown  
United States Congressman, John Tierney  
United States Congressman William Keating  
Mr. Paul Diodati, Director, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries  
Mr. Robert Zales, President, National Association of Charter Boat Operators  
Mr. James Donorio, Chairman Recreational Fishing Alliance  
Mr. Barry Gibson, NEFMC, Chairman Recreational Fishing Advisory Panel