



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

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Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

March 14, 2016

Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, Room 14636
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Nominations for New England Fishery Management Council

Dear Ms. Sobeck:

I write in response to your letter of January 20, 2016 seeking nominees for one of two at-large seats on the New England Fishery Management Council that will become vacant on August 10, 2016.

I am pleased to forward you the nomination packages for three highly qualified candidates: **Richard John Bellavance Jr.; Zachary H. Harvey; and David Paul Monti**. I respectfully seek your consideration of these fine candidates to fill the at-large seat held by Francis W. Blount Jr. of Rhode Island, who is completing his third and final term on the Council.

All three candidates have firm and impressive grasps on the many issues facing the New England Council. And, they are all particularly strong with regard to their background and experience in recreational fisheries. This is important for two reasons.

First, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act obligates the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, to the extent practicable, to ensure a fair and balanced apportionment between the commercial and recreational fishing sectors in the appointment of members to the regional fishery councils. I am aware that the current membership of the New England Council is weighted heavily toward commercial interests. In fact, at present, Mr. Blount is the only recreational member of the Council. Accordingly, it stands to reason that the Secretary will be inclined to appoint someone

with a strong recreational fishing background to fill Mr. Blount's vacancy. The slate of candidates I am submitting all represent recreational fishing.

Second, Rhode Island's obligatory seat on the New England Council is held by Mr. Eric Reid, who was appointed last year. Mr. Reid works for a major Rhode Island fish dealer/processor, and serves as an excellent representative of Rhode Island's commercial fishing industry. Thus, filling Mr. Blount's at-large seat with a representative from Rhode Island's recreational fishing industry would not only help to balance the overall membership of the Council, but also would balance the Rhode Island delegation to the Council.

The three candidates I recommend are as follows.

Richard John Bellavance Jr.

Mr. Bellavance has had a long and impressive career as a Rhode Island fisherman, representative of the Rhode Island fishing community, and member of various fishery management boards. He brings a wealth of experience, expertise, and common sense to the table. He is well-versed in the fisheries management arena. He understands the resources, the industry, and the management system. He is energetic, committed, and visionary.

Mr. Bellavance grew up in Rhode Island and has been actively engaged in recreational and commercial fishing since childhood. He owns and operates Priority Charters, LLC, a well-respected for-hire fishing business in Galilee. He is President of the Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association (65 members). He has participated in the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Marine Resource Education Program (three courses and former Board member), and he has served on a myriad of fisheries councils, commissions, committees, and panels, including:

- New England Fishery Management Council – Groundfish Advisory Panel
- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council – Scup/Black Sea Bass/Summer Flounder Advisory Panel
- NMFS Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel
- NMFS Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee – Recreational Fishing Working Group
- Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (legislative proxy)
- ASMFC Scup/Black Sea Bass/Summer Flounder Advisory Panel
- Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program – Advisory Panel, Chair
- RI Marine Fisheries Management Council
- RI Industry Advisory Committee, Chair (subset of RI Fisheries Council)
- RI Coastal Resources Management Council – Fishermen's Advisory Board

Mr. Bellavance has also served as a fishery liaison for the Deepwater Wind project off Block Island, and he has served on the boards of both the Rhode Island-based Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation and the Rhode Island Commercial Fisheries Center (the latter per his status as President of the Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association). While primarily a recreational (for-hire) fisherman, Mr. Bellavance also holds a Rhode Island commercial fishing license and occasionally engages in commercial fishing. Mr. Bellavance has demonstrated a strong commitment to the sound protection of fishery resources and the fishermen who depend on them. He has also long advocated for, and piloted, innovative approaches to data collection, research, and management, putting him at the forefront of an industry that is increasingly embracing progressive, science-based initiatives as a means for achieving growth and stability, as well as flexibility. His strong and diverse background, his grasp of the issues, his leadership skills, and his forward-thinking approach to fisheries management render him well-suited for a seat on the New England Council.

Mr. Bellavance's candidacy is strongly supported not only by the Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association and several members of the Rhode Island recreational fishing community, but also the Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island, a coalition of twelve Rhode Island-based commercial fishing organizations representing a major portion of commercial fishing interests in the state. It is noteworthy that Mr. Bellavance has strong support from the Rhode Island commercial fishing community, notwithstanding his primary status as a member of the recreational (for-hire) community.

Zachary H. Harvey

Mr. Harvey is a lifelong fisherman and long-time writer on fisheries issues, who is now committed to broadening his experience and interest by entering the fisheries management arena. He has spent much of his life on the water, in and around Rhode Island, fishing recreationally, and working aboard for-hire and commercial vessels. While most of his professional experience has been associated with the recreational (for-hire) industry, he has also worked as a deckhand on a variety of commercial operations, including rod and reel, lobster, fish pot, tub trawl, gillnet, and bottom trawl.

He earned his B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, majoring in Writing and Communications; and he participated in the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Marine Resource Education Program.

Mr. Harvey is an accomplished writer – a true fishing journalist – and the extent and depth of his writings over the years have endowed him with keen insights and forged close working relationships with many individuals from the Rhode Island and New England fishing communities. While he has not yet been a participant in the fishery management process, he has been a sharp observer and analyzer of the process over the past twenty years.

He began his career in the field as Managing Editor for the New England edition of *The Fisherman* magazine, and held that position for seven years. For five years, he also served as the Senior Field Editor for the magazine. Via those positions, he wrote countless feature articles, columns, and editorials on wide-ranging issues of importance to the New England fishing community. While the publication is recreationally oriented, Mr. Harvey had the insight, experience, and knowledge to address commercial issues as well, and did so via his thoughtful, balanced writings.

Mr. Harvey has since broadened his career – while remaining primarily focused on recreational fishing issues – serving as the Fishing Editor for *Soundings* magazine and the *Angler's Journal*, and as Editorial Consultant for the *Coastal Angler* magazine, Rhode Island edition. Over the years, he has received numerous awards and honors for his writing.

Mr. Harvey is astute, pragmatic, and conscientious. He understands the challenges facing the New England fisheries and knows many of the key stakeholders involved in the fisheries. He is ready and willing to engage in the consensus building necessary to restore, stabilize and grow the fisheries. He is a fine candidate for a seat on the New England Council.

Mr. Harvey's candidacy is supported by Chris Willi of Block Island Fishworks & Sandy Point Fly Leaders.

David Paul Monti

Mr. Monti is a well-known and highly regarded member of the Rhode Island recreational fishing community. He is a long-time charter boat captain, a fishing journalist, a thoughtful contributor to fisheries policy and management issues, and holds a top leadership role with the Rhode Island's largest recreational fishing organization representing over 7,500 recreational anglers. He is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island with dual degrees in Political Science and Journalism. He has fished recreationally since he was a boy, harvested scallops on Nantucket for fifteen years, and remains actively engaged in the recreational fishery as the owner and operator of *No Fluke Charter Fishing and Tours*.

Mr. Monti is the weekly fishing columnist for the *Providence Journal*, Rhode Island's major daily newspaper. He also writes a companion column that appears weekly in eleven other Rhode Island and Massachusetts newspapers. He has a knack for communicating clearly and effectively on a host of marine fisheries issues, with a particular focus on emerging policies, programs, and regulations affecting the state and region. He routinely travels to meetings and hearings in Washington, DC and elsewhere, to gain first-hand insight on the issues he covers.

Mr. Monti has participated in the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Marine Resource Education Program (two courses), and is currently participating in an applied shellfish farming program conducted by Roger Williams University. In 2011, he was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Management Council, and has continued to serve since then. He has emerged as a particularly active and influential member of the Council, always prepared, always inclined to ask the right questions, and always aiming to support what's best for the resources and the people who depend on them. He has twice been appointed to the NOAA Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee - Recreational Fishing Working Group as a New England representative.

Mr. Monti serves as a Vice-President and Chair of the Legislative Committee for the Rhode Island Saltwater Angler's Association, known as the largest recreational fishing association in the Northeast. He is also an active member of the Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association. With a strong background in marketing, he is working on a marketing effort aimed at raising the profile of the Rhode Island for-hire industry. As well, he is also involved with Rhode Island's Seafood Marketing Collaborative, which is focused on branding Rhode Island seafood to help increase awareness of locally landed commercial seafood products to enhance local fisheries and fishermen.

Mr. Monti offers a clear, thoughtful, and well-versed perspective on a range of priority issues associated with marine fisheries in Rhode Island. He espouses a "fish first" philosophy and is particularly focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with climate change and ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management. His background and experience, his grasp of the issues, his leadership and communication skills, and his penchant for sound, well-informed decision making render him well-suited for a seat on the New England Council.

Mr. Monti's candidacy is strongly supported by the Rhode Island Saltwater Angler's Association and the twenty-five groups and organizations affiliated with the Association, the Chair of the Rhode Island Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture, the Rhode Island Senate President Pro Tempore, the Vice-Chair of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council, and many others in the Rhode Island recreational fishing community.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management reached out to Rhode Island's entire marine fisheries community, broadly soliciting candidates for the two vacancies. No minorities applied for consideration. One woman applied for consideration; while she was found to be highly qualified, her background, experience, and current position are strongly oriented toward commercial fishing. Given the need to better balance the New England Council with representatives from the recreational fishing industry, I have opted to limit my submission of candidates to those with a strong background in and connections with the recreational fishing sector.

In considering the candidacies of Mr. Monti, Mr. Harvey, and Mr. Bellavance, I, through the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, consulted with a range of

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individuals and organizations from Rhode Island's marine fishing community, listed in the attachment to this letter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gina M. Raimondo". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor