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September 4, 2008

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW, RM 5516
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts recently experienced a failure of the commercial shellfish fishery due to an extensive algal bloom (Red Tide). I am requesting disaster assistance under Section 312(a) of the Sustainable Fisheries Act amendment to the Magnuson-Stevenson Act.

Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) has caused an extensive algal bloom (Red Tide) which has had a critical impact on Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries suspended the harvesting of all shellfish in over 600,000 acres spread over 11 communities. Approximately 1,100 commercial shellfish fishermen and 35 aquaculturists were affected by the closures.

The direct economic impact is estimated to exceed \$1,525,000 to date. Using a conservative economic multiplier of 4.5, the overall loss could approach \$7,000,000. The closures have caused economic impact on Massachusetts communities where shellfishing is a major component of annual income for some fishermen.

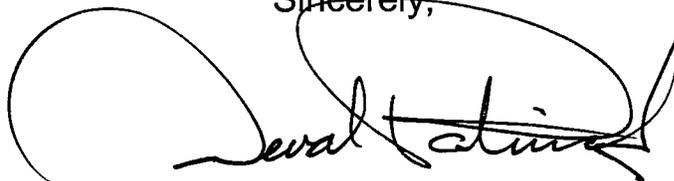
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I have determined that this incident is serious for such fishermen and disaster assistance is needed to mitigate the economic and social impact on their communities. This disaster assistance is requested to help sustain shellfish fishing and prevent a local collapse of the industry.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Massachusetts will continue to gather more data and is ready to provide your staff with any additional information that would assist you in making a determination regarding a fishery failure and a fishery resource disaster. I have designated Mary Griffin, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, as the State Coordinating Officer for this event to act on my behalf regarding this request. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts looks forward to working with you to explore potential management options and to provide relief to shellfish fishermen and their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlos M. Gutierrez", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".