



**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**

State House, Room 224  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
401-222-2080

**Lincoln D. Chafee**  
Governor

March 8, 2013

Sam Rauch  
Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
NOAA - National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East-West Highway, Room 14636  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Nomination for New England Fishery Management Council

Dear Mr. Rauch:

I write in response to your request for nominations for two at-large seats on the New England Fishery Management Council, which will become vacant in August 2013.

I am herewith forwarding for your consideration the nomination packages for three excellent candidates from Rhode Island: Theodore Platz, Francis Blount, Jr., and Richard Bellavance, Jr. I ask that these three candidates be considered for one of the two at-large seats.

**Having carefully considered the qualifications of each of the three candidates, I respectfully recommend the appointment of Theodore Platz.**

Mr. Platz has nearly 30 years of experience as a commercial fisherman, including several years working as a deckhand for fish trap and lobster operations, several years as captain of an inshore lobster boat, and since 1994, as the owner and operator of commercial vessels engaged in lobstering and gill netting for monkfish, skate, and dogfish. In recent years, Mr. Platz has expanded his company – Ocean Harvest, Inc. operating out of Newport, RI -- to include a fleet of three commercial vessels and two refrigeration trucks; his company also serves as a federally permitted fisheries dealer.

Mr. Platz has a B.A. degree in Economic Theory from Emory and Henry College. He has participated in the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Marine Resources Education Program, and served as a moderator for the Program. In 2006, Mr. Platz formed the Rhode Island Monkfishermen's Association, and has continued to serve as President of the Association since its inception. He is a member of the Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island, and recently served as the President of that organization, whose membership includes most of the commercial fishing organizations in Rhode Island.

March 8, 2013

Page Two

Mr. Platz has been deeply involved in marine fisheries issues pertaining to the New England Council for over eight years. He has been appointed by the Council to serve on the Council's Research Steering Committee, Skate Advisory Panel, and Monkfish Advisory Panel, and was recently named Chairman of the latter. He is a regular attendee at Council meetings, and regularly contributes to Council discussions and deliberations.

In addition to a strong resume, Mr. Platz has the knowledge, energy, temperament, and fortitude to function effectively in the very challenging arena of marine fisheries management in the New England region. He has many ideas on how the management system can be improved, and is not shy about advancing them. He is conservation minded, understands the needs and interests of the fishing industry, and recognizes the importance of managing fishery resources on the basis of sound science and with a view to long-term sustainability.

I am particularly impressed by the solid support for Mr. Platz's candidacy offered by an array of interests associated with Rhode Island's commercial fishing industry. He is clearly well-regarded among his peers. I received strong letters of support for Mr. Platz from the following organizations and businesses:

- o Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association (Bedford, NH)
- o Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association (Wakefield, RI)
- o Sakonnet Point Fishermen's Association (Little Compton, RI)
- o Seafreeze Ltd. (North Kingstown, RI)
- o Sea Fresh USA, Inc (North Kingstown, RI)
- o V Northeast Fishery Sector, Inc. (Narragansett, RI)

Rhode Island is fortunate to have a strong presence on the New England Council. With this letter of recommendation, I seek to maintain that strong presence, while helping to ensure that Rhode Island's recreational and commercial fishing interests are equally well represented.

The other two nominees I am submitting for the one at-large seat are also strong candidates.

**Francis Blount, Jr.** has served admirably on the Council for a total of 15 years, including an impressive tenure as Chairman. With a degree in Fisheries and Marine Technology from the University of Rhode Island, and with more than 40 years of experience as owner-operator of the Frances Fleet, a premier for-hire fishing business based in Galilee, RI, Mr. Blount has a strong academic and professional background, and has long been a leader in the state and regional fishing community. He is well-versed and highly respected. In his capacity as New England Council liaison to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, he has made tremendous strides in informing and influencing the management programs for many species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council but of significant interests to Rhode Island. Because of the nature of his business, he tends to be affiliated with the recreational fishing community; nonetheless, he has always represented the needs and interests of Rhode Island's commercial and recreational fishermen in a fair and balanced way. I received strong letters of support for Mr. Blount's candidacy from the following organizations:

- o Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (Coventry, RI)
- o Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association (North Kingstown, RI)

March 8, 2013

Page Three

**Richard Bellavance, Jr.** is a rising star in the marine fishing community, not only at the local level here in Rhode Island, but on the regional and national scene as well. He is deeply engaged in the marine fisheries management process at all levels, and currently serves on a myriad of councils, committees, and panels, including:

- Rhode Island Fishery Management Council
- Rhode Island Industry Advisory Committee
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Legislative Proxy)
- NMFS Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel
- New England Council Groundfish Advisory Panel
- Mid-Atlantic Council Scup/Black Sea Bass/Summer Flounder Advisory Panel
- ASMFC Scup/Black Sea Bass/Summer Flounder Advisory Panel
- ACCSP Advisory Panel (which is currently chairs)

Mr. Bellavance has been involved in the marine fishing industry for more than 20 years, mostly as a charter boat captain. He has participated in the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Marine Resources Education Program, and serves as a member of the MREP Board. He is the President of the Rhode Island Charter and Party Boat Association, and he is a member of the board of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation. He brings a wealth of experience, expertise, and common sense to the table. He is highly regarded among his peers, overflowing with good ideas, and is unquestionably an excellent candidate for the New England Council seat.

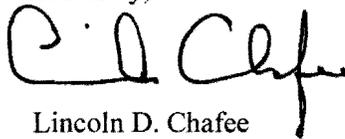
Although the RI Department of Environmental Management reached out to Rhode Island's entire marine fisheries community, broadly soliciting candidates for the vacancy, we received no requests for consideration by any women or minority candidates.

Acting through the Office of my Director of the Department of Environmental Management, Janet Coit, I consulted with the following individuals regarding the three nominees:

- Christopher Brown, President, Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association
- James Fox, President, Sea Fresh USA
- Christopher Joy, General Manager, Seafreeze Ltd
- Gregory Mataronas, President, Sakonnet Point Fishermen's Association
- Frederick Mattera, Treasurer, V Northeast Fishery Sector Inc.
- Stephen Medeiros, President, Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association
- Bonnie Spinazzola, Executive Director, Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lincoln D. Chafee  
Governor