

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 21, 2020

Patrick Keliher
Commissioner
Maine Department of Marine Resources
21 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Commissioner Keliher,

We are pleased that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has finally announced the allocation of \$300 million in fishing industry relief provided by Sec.12005 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, of which Maine will receive more than \$20 million. Your Department plays an essential role in ensuring that our fishermen and lobstermen are able to support their families and communities – a role that has become even more critical in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With each day that passes, the damage imposed upon Maine's hardworking harvesters and seafood supply chain businesses worsens. As your team works to develop a plan for how this funding will be allocated within the state, we stand ready to assist the Department and to ensure that NOAA's approval of the state's ultimate plan occurs promptly.

We appreciate the attention and effort that your Department is dedicating to the efficient and effective distribution of this critical funding, including your solicitation of input from the industry via survey on how this money would be best spent. It is absolutely critical that this assistance be provided as quickly as possible to those individuals working on the water whose livelihoods have suffered through no fault of their own. As Congress considers further COVID-19 relief legislation, we will continue to advocate for additional fishing industry relief given that the market disruptions are likely to persist well into the summer.

Again, thank you for your work on behalf of Maine. The Maine seafood industry and those who work within it are defined by resilience, and we are confident that – with the support of the state and federal government – this sector will demonstrate its resilience once again.



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress