Case, Michael

From: Kathy Mathis [kmathis3@ec.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2010 7:12 PM
To: Secretary, The
Subject: Snapper/Grouper Closures

To:
President Obama
U.S. Dept. of Commerce
NOAA
NMFS
SAFMC

Dear Sirs, and Ladies,
We are in the federal snapper/grouper commercial fishing industry out of Morehead City, North Carolina.
We are suffering severe economic injury with closures in our fishery on and off during the year of our most valued species. Our incomes are literally cut in half with absolutely no compensation. And we know there is more to come!

We feel that if our President only knew we existed, he would help us. We have always written letters to congressmen, senators, and the powers that be, usually with no response or they would thank us for our concern. But we must continue to speak out.

We feel that our President has an insight to average people's problems because he knows what it is like on Main Street, he is not from the privileged;
born like most without a silver spoon or trust account and knows what it is like out here in the real world. And we just want to work!!!

Plainly we are being regulated out of business.
Conservationist groups such as the Pew Trust, with endless means to fund lobbyist, are getting regulations passed against the commercial

fishing industry practically effortlessly.

Commercial fishing is a real industry in this country and has been since the beginning; proclaimed to be America's first industry! We supply revenue for our families, help feed the nation, provide jobs, promote tourism, and promote other industries such as boat building, bait and tackle shops, restaurants, and fuel docks...all with a tax basis for our counties, state and nation.

We are importing way too much seafood as it is...
OUTSOURCING our own American jobs for that of others.
Everyone is already seeing that outsourcing is killing our country;
so stop the buck here!

Our natural resources of the sea are vast, multiplying since the beginning of time. But marine biologist and scientist think they have the formulas that tell them how many fish we have now, and how many there were in the beginning, and how many they need to rebuild; with these regulations and closures.

What we realize is that they are comparing the data of what we are catching now to their estimate of what was being caught in the 1960's and 1970's.
First of all there was no data in the 60's and 70's so it is indeed estimates;
but of course we are not catching now what they were then...when they were longlining then and using nets. We hook and line all our fish. And there are less fishermen now than in the 70's...so of course we are catching less.

There are so fewer fishermen in the industry now than there was even 10 years ago it is unreal. In fact there are more fisheries management personnel now than there are fishermen! 10 years ago there was approx. 2300 Federal Snapper/Grouper permits in the South Atlantic region, NC - FL, now there are only 460...80% reduction in 10 years

due to regulations.
And yet they say we are still over fishing the stocks. It just is not so.

At this point they are just growing their industry depleting ours; government jobs, Mr. President.....
Whatever happened to downsizing the government to save the country money?

We cannot stop them; we have no means to hire attorneys or lobbyist to fight. But they could be made to compensate us with subsidies or buyouts.
We're not asking for bailouts...just subsidies...or buyouts and they would not have to worry about us fishing ever again.

Our Congressman Walter B. Jones knows we are suffering, and is trying to help us. He knows fishermen right now are losing their homes and families due to the economic impact of these closures.

Putting people out of work with no monetary compensation!
The government pays farmers not to plant; they need to pay us not to fish.
WE NEED TO SUBSIDIZED...US OR BUY US OUT COMPLETELY!!!

Right now federal closures are piggybacking each other with a snapper closure on top of a grouper closure. The other species open to catch have half the value of snapper or grouper...thus they have all our fishermen up against a financial wall. Economic injury with no bail out...no subsidies...no buy outs.
Everyone is losing their lively hoods, their homes, fishing boats & families.

The snapper closure last fall caused us to have to close our seafood facility.
We closed the first of the year and have it for sale. We were open 6 years.

If it does not sell soon it will go into foreclosure;
and we will lose our only chance at getting out of debt.
My husband is a diabetic and had open heart surgery and 5 stinting procedures 3 years ago and he has been in real bad health...
but he risks life and limb to provide for his family.
We have tried not to file bankruptcy...we cannot even afford to due to incorporated business fees...

These closures are causing us to stay 2 -3 months behind in payments all the time...we are receiving warnings of foreclosure month after month...for the first time in our lives we have not been able to pay our bills.

This is a time in our lives we were hoping to be getting close to retirement
at least hoping that our boat would be able to furnish us with a retirement income of some sort. Sadly there seems to be little that can be done.

WE NEED SOMEONES HELP OUT HERE...
NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE IF WE DISAPEAR LIKE THE DINOSAURS...
The conservationist are more interested in saving the fish than they are of saving the human lives of the fishermen!

My husband is 58 years old. He has fished for 34 years.
This is what he does. He is a fisherman and a proud one!
He is the oldest one now of the snapper/grouper guys in our area,
he is in the worst health, he has been successful, and has allot to lose,
he is a good man...the salt of the earth...always willing to help anyone.

If there is any way you can you help us...
this industry's people need your help...
This is a real industry that should not be starved out of production due to its own government...especially without sanctions, subsidies, or buyouts.

Again these regulations are causing too much economic injury...
The Magnuson Act needs to be rewritten again...
(George W. signed for this in 2006)
WE NEED SUBSIDIES FOR OUR LOSSES...
OR COMPLETE BUYOUTS!!!
PLEASE HELP US...

Kindest Regards,
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and

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