



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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For more information, contact:  
Jack Pratt 202/225-3335  
Jon Schneider 202/225-3826

**Press Release**

**Bishop and Israel Announce Legislation to Fight for  
Long Island Fisherman**

***New Legislation Would Give LI Fisherman Vote on New England Regulating Organization***

Sayville NY—Today Congressmen Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) and Steve Israel (D-Huntington) announced new legislation to help Long Island fisherman. Local fisherman joined the congressmen in announcing an effort to secure representation for local fisherman on the organization responsible for preparing fishery management plans.

“We do not seek to give New York fishermen an advantage, but we demand a level playing field,” Bishop said.

“When it comes to having input into important federal decisions on commercial fishing, New York is left high and dry,” Israel added. “Our legislation will give local fisherman a voice.”

The New England Fisheries Management Council is a regional federal body responsible for regulating fishing practices in the region. Even though New York fisherman fish in the region and fish for species regulated by the New England Council, they do not have membership on that body. This deprives our fisherman of a critical voice and vote on issues of critical importance to them.

The problem is that New York borders two fishery management councils: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the New England Fishery Management Council. New York only has membership on one (Mid-Atlantic). Other border states have representation on multiple councils, such as Florida, Oregon, and Washington. In 1996, North Carolina was granted membership on the Mid-Atlantic Council in addition to its current membership on the South Atlantic Council.

With reports of declining fish stocks, federal managers are likely to take action that could be devastating for those whose livelihood depends on what they harvest from the sea. This makes it even more critical that New York State have membership on the New England Fisheries Management Council.

Many species of fish that are important to Long Island fishermen are regulated by the NEFMC. The whiting, for example, has an economic impact to New York of over \$20 million, but this species is managed by the NEFMC.

When there were discussions about the compensation of fisherman for lost Days at Sea, none of the alternatives that were good for New York fisherman were considered on the New England Fishery Council floor because no one was able to make a motion to discuss the matter further.

Additionally, when a \$16 million groundfish relief package made its way into an appropriations bill last year, the money went to boats from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine and New Hampshire to offset losses resulting from a reduction in their Days at Sea (days allowed to fish for groundfish). Some New York boats had their Days at Sea reduced from 88 to 10, but New York did not share in the relief package.

Bishop and Israel will introduce the *New York Fair Fishing Act of 2003* next week to address the problem.

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