

To The Holders of My Future,

My name is BG Brown, and I'm a second-generation fisherman out of Gloucester, Massachusetts. I have been fishing on 30 to 70 foot boats for over twenty-five years and currently own a 31-foot gillnetter/longliner.

I am greatly concerned about my future as a day boat fisherman in the Gulf of Maine. Having owned my permit for only 2 of the 10 qualifying years, my future as a fisherman is based on someone else's ability to catch fish. To stay in the industry I am faced once again with the decision to buy in or get out.

I love what I do and have had several opportunities to buy more quota but have been outbid by larger capacity boat owners. I'm watching as the bigger boats buy up the smaller boats' catch shares. I have tried to play the market as best I can to maximize my prices (which means going out in weather that other guys may not). I have even leased more fish at these crazy high prices, basically working for change just to keep working. My stock is about 20% of what it usually is this time of year, so investing \$200,000 for another permit with better history is not realistic. Also, along with every other permit owner on the east coast I have plenty of pollock but I can't get offshore in my 31' boat to target them.

I feel that it is very important that some sort of mechanism be put into place that would prohibit one entity from owning a large percent of the quota, whether it is current baseline restrictions or some other strategy.

It is a well known fact that catch share systems in almost all other countries have led to fewer, larger boats. This sort of fleet would only benefit a select few, and I believe that it would lead to more habitat destruction (bigger boats with greater towing capabilities will be able to tow over anything in their way). I don't see how a country that is going green, and all about creating jobs could pass such measures without first considering the environmental and economic impacts of their actions.

My crewmember and I are hard workers and I feel that I am a good fisherman. I keep asking myself why we shouldn't have the same opportunity to fish as the next guy. I thought that I had my foot in the door, but in reality I am watching the bus drive away with no hope in ever catching it again. I feel worse for my crewmember, who like me has a passion for fishing, but unless he wins the lottery, will never even have a chance to be an owner operator. I am stressed out, and out of ideas.

I am very happy to see that prioritizing fleet diversity has made it on the Council agenda. I don't have all the answers that would keep our small boat, single permit holder fleet alive. I hope that together we can come up with solutions that will enable small-scale fishing operations to survive. Our fishing fleet in the northeast has always been a mix of boats both large and small utilizing many different fishing methods. It would be a shame to lose a part of our historical fleet.

Thank You,  
BG Brown