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Fishermen, Local Activists and Environmentalists Unite in Asking Snowe to Save Maine's Fishermen

Portland, ME – For three months, Portland-area citizens have been signing hundreds of postcards asking for oversight hearings on fisheries management, and today those requests reached Senator Olympia Snowe.

Fair Fish Portland worked with local community members and organizations to develop a joint call for Senator Snowe to initiate oversight hearings on the implementation of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act – the legislation that oversees federal fisheries management. Through that effort, Maine businesses, organizations, and key individuals united. Bringing diverse constituencies together, signatories range from fishermen's alliances and fish markets to businesses and environmental groups.

In the State of Maine Room at Portland City Hall, Food and Water Watch's Fair Fish Campaign asked Senator Snowe to call for Congressional oversight hearings on catch shares to analyze their socioeconomic and environmental impacts.

"Catch shares, a new fisheries management policy, divide our fisheries into shares and give them to those who have fished the hardest and the fastest and exclude historical fishermen that fish more responsibly," according to Laura Bramley, volunteer with the Fair Fish Campaign.

"Senator Snowe has played a critical role in the development of federal fisheries laws and the health of Maine's fishing communities. We hope she will once again play a leadership role and move forward on holding congressional oversight hearings to ensure that all aspects of the federal fisheries act are applied when drafting fisheries management policies including the development of catch shares." said Niaz Dorry, Coordinating Director of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. "There are ten National Standards that were created to protect the marine ecosystem and fishing communities. All ten of those standards must be adhered to in any catch share program to ensure that they are fair, equitable, and responsive to the dynamics of the marine ecosystems."

Among bright posters, a 6-foot "Fair Fish" and a Thanksgiving theme to represent American tradition, Laura Bramley described the tradition that the campaign hopes to protect.

“Fishing is America’s oldest industry, where home-grown small businesses have taken care of our oceans and provided us with sustainable, healthy food” she states. “Only a handful of congressmen can make a difference – Senator Snowe, as she serves on the Senate subcommittee that manages fisheries, is one of them.”

Lynne Williams, candidate for Governor with the Maine Green Party, states: “Small, independent businesses are the backbone of our economy and we cannot abandon them. We must protect the rights of independent fishing families against the seemingly unquenchable desire of large corporations to control every aspect of our natural resources.” “Fish and shellfish are part of the commons – they belong to all of us, given that no one owns the waters off our coast.”

On behalf of 558 constituents who have signed postcards, and a coalition of 14 members, we ask that Senator Snowe save our fishermen and coastal communities by calling for Congressional oversight hearings as soon as possible.

Food and Water Watch is a national advocacy organization that works to ensure wholesome and safe food produced in a sustainable manner.

The **Fair Fish Campaign** is active in eight coastal cities nationally to ensure that fisheries management policies are not designed so that they will enrich a few private corporations at the expense of our ocean ecosystems and the livelihoods of small-scale fishermen—now we just need Senator Snowe to take action.

The **Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance**’s mission is to restore and enhance an enduring marine system supporting a healthy diversity and an abundance of marine life and human uses through a self-organizing and self-governing organization. NAMA works closely with communities from Maine to Long Island.

If you’d like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview, please call Nathalie Graham at (415) 720-6315 or email Nathalie@Greencorps.org.

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Speaker Biographies

Laura Bramley is a student at the University of Southern Maine, and has volunteered with the Fair Fish campaign since its launch in September 2009. She has worked to educate and engage Maine residents to take action and help local fishermen.

For more information, contact Laura at Laura.bramley@maine.edu

Mike Love is a commercial fisherman from Maine. He owns a mid-size fishing vessel and works with eight employees.

For more information, contact Mike at Lovefisheries@hotmail.com

Lynne Williams is a candidate for Governor on the Maine Green Independent Party ticket. She currently lives and works in Bar Harbor and has lived in many fishing communities throughout the state, including Rockland, Port Clyde and Spruce Head. As an attorney, Lynne represents community groups throughout the state that are resisting inappropriate industrial development in their communities. She also represents small businesses, including fishing families, independent farmers and artisans.

For more information, contact Lynne at lwill@earthlink.net

Wells Staley-Mays is the Program Coordinator for Peace Action Maine, an affiliate of National Peace Action. As the largest peace organization in Maine, PAM has worked for 25 years to promote peace through grassroots organizing, citizen education, and issue advocacy.

For more information, contact Wells at guide.freedomtrail1850@yahoo.com

Nathalie Graham is the Field Organizer for the Fair Fish Campaign in Portland. A recent graduate of University of California, Davis, Nathalie began organizing with Food & Water Watch this fall when she, along with seven other organizers nationwide, helped launch the Fair Fish Campaign in eight coastal cities.

For more information, contact Nathalie at (415)720-6315 or nathalie@greencorps.org



Founded in 2005, **Food & Water Watch** is a national non-profit organization that works with grassroots organizations around the world to create an economically and environmentally viable future. Through research, public and policymaker education, media, and lobbying, we advocate policies that guarantee safe, wholesome food produced in a humane and sustainable manner and public, rather than private, control of water resources including oceans, rivers, and groundwater. Food & Water Watch protects our essential resources by transforming the public consciousness about what we eat and drink and by helping people to take action to make a difference.

At Food & Water Watch, we believe that the public should be able to count on our government to oversee and protect the quality and safety of food and water. We deserve to know that food and water are free of unhealthy chemicals, bacteria and added hormones. We have the right to know where our food comes from with accurate labeling and we have the right to clean, affordable, publicly owned water. Food & Water Watch is dedicated to working on behalf of the public to assert and regain these rights as we lobby for effective government standards and oversight, organize the public to take action, and educate the public and the media on these basic issues.

For more information on Food and Water Watch, check out www.foodandwaterwatch.org.



The Food & Water Watch **Fair Fish Campaign** is active in eight coastal cities nationally. The Fair Fish Campaign works to ensure that fishery management policies are not designed so that they will enrich a few private corporations at the expense of our ocean ecosystems and the livelihoods of small-scale fishermen.

For more information about Fair Fish, go to <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fish/oceans-policy> or www.fairfishportland.info.