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**JOINT RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE DELEGATION OF
THE 2008 NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL TO
CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS TO ENSURE A HEALTHY
SUSTAINABLE GROUND FISHERY FOR NEW ENGLAND**

your Memorialists, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-third Legislature of the State of Maine now assembled in the First Special Session, most respectfully present and petition the delegates to the 2008 New England Fishery Management Council as follows:

WHEREAS, New England has the oldest and richest fishing heritage in the Nation, and it can be said that one of the reasons that New England and the United States itself were founded was the rich fishing grounds off our shores and their abundant populations of cod and other groundfish; and

WHEREAS, the historical abundance of cod in the Gulf of Maine is legendary and is a foundation of Maine's culture and communities; and

WHEREAS, in the last half century, the groundfish stock within the Gulf of Maine has suffered a sad depletion and has not rebounded as it has in other regions, which threatens the economy of Maine's historic fishing communities and inflicts economic hardship on Maine's remaining groundfishing families today; and

WHEREAS, as an indicator of this decline, in the 10 years from 1996 to 2006 the State's active federal fishery permits have declined from 165 to 91, a 45% decline; and

WHEREAS, except for a few businesses left in Portland and Port Clyde that are barely surviving, the State of Maine has lost the shoreside firms that support the groundfish, including ice suppliers, fish buyers and processors, fishing gear shops, bait suppliers, boat repair businesses and trucking firms, and the accompanying added value; and

WHEREAS, the loss of fish and the loss of fishing livelihoods and shoreside business have occurred under the current approach to management, which limits the days fishermen may go to sea, known as "Days at Sea"; and

WHEREAS, "Days at Sea" alone has not, in the judgment of your Memorialists, achieved the primary goal of fisheries management: to ensure the long-term regeneration of an abundance of groundfish in the Gulf of Maine and in the New England region and to thus rebuild the equitable redistribution of our fishery resource among fishing communities and economies; and

WHEREAS, the New England Fishery Management Council requested public proposals for alternative systems of management for the New England fishery to provide for a more sustainable, renewable and equitable distribution of our historic fishery resource; and

HP1688, item 1, 123rd Maine State Legislature
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WHEREAS, we must take every action possible to bring back the abundance of groundfish to the whole Gulf of Maine, to contribute to the rebuilding of groundfish throughout the New England region and to benefit coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, the region's fishing grounds do possess the ability to recover to historic levels of productivity, and it is necessary to preserve Maine fishermen's opportunities to continue to fish when groundfish stocks are recovered; and

WHEREAS, many Maine communities have lost much of their access to the groundfish industry, and the ongoing erosion of federal groundfish permits and "Days at Sea" have severely restricted the ability of Maine permit holders to fish at all; so few days remaining, as a practical matter, rendering the permits useless and restricting the rights of Maine citizens to fish; and

WHEREAS, community-based initiatives including establishing sectors, permit banking and area management hold a great future hope for recovery of the resource, recognizing as they do the ecological differences between ocean regions and species and emphasizing alignment of economic, ecological and sustainable harvesting interests to ensure a long-term recovery of the fishing business in New England; and

WHEREAS, we cannot sit by and permit our heritage to be lost on our watch and our communities removed from their connection with the sea; now, therefore, be it

That We, your Memorialists, respectfully urge and request that the New England Fishery Management Council commit to establishment of an equitable future distribution and allocation of permits to all qualified Maine fishermen when stocks rebound, to ensure that the benefit of rebuilt groundfish stocks accrued to all Maine fishermen; and be it further

That We, your Memorialists, request that the allocation process support not only individual permitted fishermen, but also traditional fishing communities and nonprofit community efforts intended to sustain our fisheries and the fishing way of life; and be it further

That We, your Memorialists, request that the delegates from the State of Maine to the 2008 New England Fisheries Management Council support and actively work for an equitable allocation of future permits to qualified Maine fishermen when stocks rebound, to share the benefit with all Maine fishermen; to ensure that the allocation process benefits both individuals and communities; and to advocate for effective groundfish management through community-based initiatives including establishing sectors, permit banking and area management to benefit all who in days to come shall "go down to the sea in ships, and do business upon the great waters"; and be it further

That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to John Pappalardo, Chairman of the New England Fishery Management Council, Rip Cunningham, Chairman of the Multispecies (Groundfish) Committee, Paul Howard, Executive Director of the New England Fishery Management Council, Pat Kurkul, Regional Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service and to each member of the New England Fishery Management Council and each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.