

## NORTHERN PELAGIC GROUP LLC

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Via e-mail

April 5, 2011

Governor Deval Patrick, Commonwealth of MA  
Mayor Scott Lang, City of New Bedford  
Ms. Patricia Kurkul, NMFS NERO Regional Director

Dear Sirs and Madam,

As President of NORPEL, I am writing today to tell you our company recently laid off all of its 120 employees, and tied our remaining vessels to the dock. NORPEL is in this precarious situation primarily due to a loss of fishing opportunities which have resulted from management actions taken by the NEFMC and supported by the State of Massachusetts and NMFS.

Northern Pelagic Group LLC (NORPEL) was conceived by four individuals with extensive expertise in commercial fishing, processing and marketing, with a focus on the abundant Atlantic Sea Herring and Mackerel resources in the US North Atlantic Ocean.

In 2002, we established our business in New Bedford and, with no state or federal or NGO money, constructed a state-of-the-art fish processing facility on Fish Island, where the former Lumber Yard adjacent to Maritime Terminal had for several years sat vacant. We re-located and retrofitted three fishing vessels in order to be capable of safely operating offshore in severe weather conditions, and which deliver food grade herring and mackerel in sophisticated Refrigerated Seawater (RSW) holds to our shore-based plant.

At the time of our decision to invest in New Bedford, the Atlantic sea herring and mackerel fisheries were being accessed by foreign fleets through Joint Ventures approved by the US State Department. Biomass estimates by NMFS supported an expansion of the fisheries for each stock and domestic quotas were set at 350,000 mt. US landings at the time were nearly 100,000 mt for herring and less than 15,000 mt for mackerel. "Americanization" of the fisheries was promoted by the US Commerce Department Foreign Trade Office, NMFS NERO and the State of Massachusetts. Trade missions were being conducted by federal and state entities to help US producers develop foreign markets for export of US herring and mackerel.

Since 2002, we have invested in excess of \$20 million in the plant and vessels and employed 120 Massachusetts residents. We have spent more than \$5 million annually on payroll, contractors, materials and supplies, lodging, fuel, and various goods and services. We have paid \$millions in corporate income taxes to the Commonwealth. According to a study conducted by Maritime Terminals, every time NORPEL exported a load of frozen herring or mackerel to market, over \$500,000.00 in economic activity is generated in the Port of New Bedford. We have taken the lead in cooperative research programs, supported federal and state fishery observer programs and served in a variety of advisory capacities.

In spite of this track record, not once in the 9 years we have operated were we contacted by Governor Patrick, nor by NMFS NERO Regional Director Kurkul, to thank us for our contributions to the Commonwealth and the US and to see how the State of MA and federal government could support us.

Prior to 2006, we were able to fish herring from June through November in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank. We would then focus on mackerel from January to April. That made for a viable business.

However, starting as early as 2003, the tide turned against us in the regional management (political) arena, and the subsequent loss of fishing access has finally resulted in our decision to cease our operations.

**["High Quality Atlantic Herring & Mackerel"](http://www.norpel.com)**  
**[www.norpel.com](http://www.norpel.com)**



We can demonstrate these management actions are the direct result of the "Atlantic Herring Campaign" conceived, coordinated and funded by the nonprofit/non-taxpaying Pew Environment Group and their proxies at Chatham-based Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association (CCCHFA), Chatham-based Pew Herring Alliance and Chatham-based CHOIR Coalition. These are all related Chatham-based NGOs with a combined payroll in excess of \$1.5 million but accounting for less than 2% of the groundfish landings in the Northeast.

Since 2003, according to the public record, CCCHFA has received millions of dollars from Pew Charitable Trusts (and other Foundations) to conduct the "Atlantic Herring Campaign", designed, according to the Pew and CCCHFA websites to: "Eliminate, or severely restrict the Midwater trawl fishery for Atlantic herring". This is part of a larger "Forage Fish Campaign" coordinated and funded by Pew Environment Group which includes direct payments to Universities, SSC members and other newly conceived NGOs. It is critical to understand that ecosystem "forage" needs are considered in the federal herring and mackerel fishery FMPs and are deducted "off the top" before any allocations to the domestic commercial fishery are made.

Nonetheless, with this funding and resulting media machine, CCCHFA secured voting positions and a hugely disproportionate political influence in the region's fisheries management arena, given their paltry landings and minimal economic contribution to the Commonwealth.

Appointments such as these are made at the direction of the Governor, with approval by the Secretary of Commerce (ultimately acting at the direction of the President). The Governor's policy is carried out by his Director of Marine Fisheries which also has a seat on the NEFMC and ASMFC.

Governor Deval Patrick-appointed fishery management decision-making positions, all with momentous ramifications to our fishery, include: NEFMC Chairman (held by CCCHFA Pappalardo since 2003); NEFMC Groundfish AP (CCCHFA Parker); NEFMC Herring AP (CCCHFA-Pew Baker); ASMFC State rep (CCCHFA Martens as Proxy for State Rep. Sarah Peake); MA Marine Fisheries Commission (CCCHFA Pappalardo); and so on. Further, Governor Patrick has recently nominated another CCCHFA employee as his #1 pick for a successor to the NEFMC and CCCHFA's John Pappalardo.

Ironically, these very political appointees also engineered (and personally benefitted from) the imposition of sector management in the groundfish FMP, which has become a threat to the viability of many Commonwealth groundfishermen, and which the Governor now claims to oppose.

We have been on the record repeatedly about this issue of special interest group empowerments by the State of MA, and the corrosive effect on our ability to operate a viable business. I wrote to Governor Patrick as recently as October 2010 about our needs in this respect. However, my letter was never answered. This is my last attempt to notify you of the damage – economic and societal -- being done to the local and regional economies, and residents of the Commonwealth by these special interest groups. Beware the Regional Seafood Association provisions in Magnuson, which are the next tool these special interests will use to disenfranchise the remaining fishing businesses in New England.

Sincerely,

Brady Schofield  
President  
NORPEL

Cc: Congressman Barney Frank  
Senator John Kerry

Governor Deval Patrick-Mayor Scott Lang  
April 5, 2011

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