Dear Mr. Moore and Mr. Beal:

We write to express our strong support for the effort to address summer flounder allocations and quota proposed by the Rhode Island delegation during the joint meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in Virginia.

We appreciate the Council and Commission’s efforts to address the significant concerns regarding the management of this fishery, which has not been altered since 1993 and is based on landing data from the 1980s.

The summer flounder fishery is one of Rhode Island’s most important and valuable – landings last year totaled 1,022,513 pounds, with an associated value of $4.7 million. The fishery is Rhode Island’s most valuable relative to all other finfish landed in the State, and Rhode Island’s annual landings are generally the third highest among all East Coast states. Recognizing that the species’ distribution, biomass, and fishing effort have changed considerably over time, it is fitting for the Council and Commission to adapt existing methods and allocations to address changes occurring in marine ecosystems. We believe the Rhode Island proposal offers a flexible and dynamic framework that will modernize historical allocations using updated stock assessments.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important issue within all applicable rules and regulations.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator