



The following statement was submitted to New England Senators and coastal district Representatives by six New England commercial fishing industry associations on September 6, 2022:

Esteemed Senators and Representatives:

As you know, the Inflation Reduction Act is a landmark piece of legislation that represents a turning point in America's commitment to confront the major challenge of our lifetimes: climate change.

Our industry forms the backbone of coastal New England, providing healthy protein to our neighbors and the world. We write to you now to ensure that the investments enabled by the Inflation Reduction Act are fishery friendly. It will take hard work to ensure this takes place, and we ask for your assistance in this regard.

Commercial fishermen and seafood businesses are no strangers to the impacts of climate change. We are directly affected by warming waters, ocean acidification, shifting fish stocks, changing seasonalities, altered predator-prey relationships, changes in behavior of protected species, climate-facilitated species invasions, increased storminess, sea level rise, and more.

Our businesses and communities are committed to ensuring that the threat of climate change does not undermine America's fishery ecosystems, fishing and seafood jobs and businesses, coastal ways of life, and most importantly, our ability to provide nutritious seafood for the American public. In fact, no one is more invested in the future of the oceans than commercial fishermen. That is why fishermen have spent decades defending the marine environment from ocean-based energy development, beginning with decades of passionate opposition to oil and gas development on Georges Bank led by the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association. It is also why we now stand united under the leadership of the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA) in expressing our deep concern that the seafood industry and fishing communities will be enormously disrupted by the myriad of impacts, and unprecedented scale of impacts, from offshore wind energy development. You and your staff are no doubt deeply familiar with these concerns.

More recently, fishermen around the country have begun endorsing a Fishery Friendly Climate Action agenda¹ that calls on elected officials to preferentially support *fishery-friendly* climate solutions that:

- Reduce, sequester, or avoid greenhouse gas emissions;

¹ More information is available at fisheryfriendlyclimateaction.org

- Avoid collateral impacts on the physical, chemical, and ecological properties and processes of ocean, coastal, estuarine, and watershed environments;
- Avoid interference with the harvest and provision of wild seafood;
- Wherever possible, contribute conservation co-benefits that enhance the resilience of ocean, coastal, estuarine, and watershed ecosystems;
- Help the fishing industry address its own carbon footprint by supporting transition to low-carbon fishing vessels; and
- Contribute to putting the U.S. on track to reduce its share of greenhouse gas emissions to a level that will hold warming well below 2°C while pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

The Inflation Reduction Act will galvanize investments and innovation in numerous fishery friendly climate solutions, including small-scale clean energy generation; energy efficiency in homes, buildings, cities, and ports; farm-based renewable energy production; forest- and soil-based carbon sequestration; and more. Many of these solutions put dollars back into local communities, save ratepayers money, utilize the built environment and working lands, and increase equitable access to the benefits of the green economy. Farm- and forest-based measures even provide co-benefits to landscapes and watersheds, such as reduced runoff and improved wildlife habitat. These are things that the fishing industry can wholeheartedly celebrate and encourage.

Unfortunately, the Act may also intensify the already-astounding ambition of offshore wind development along U.S. coasts, through its tax credits, funds for electricity transmission planning, directives to expand leasing in the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and island territories, and more. Industrial wind energy will directly conflict with fishing and food production, while imposing significant impacts on marine habitats, biodiversity, and physical oceanography. The current goal of developing 30 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity in U.S. waters by 2030, set last year by President Biden, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy, is shortsighted and reckless. It will be *impossible* for government agencies to plan, permit, and pursue development at the planned pace and scale without abandoning *all* of the hallmarks of modern environmental protection, including sound science, thorough environmental review, and precautionary and adaptive management.

In sum, as transformational as the Inflation Reduction Act is, it neglects to consider or minimize the impacts of climate solutions on our nation's precious marine environments and resources in several key ways. This is a glaring gap, but it is one that we are determined to fill.

In the years ahead, fishermen and other caretakers of the nation's lands and seas will wage a sustained campaign to ensure that implementation of the Act is both successful at achieving U.S. emission reductions targets while also being protective of America's lands, waters, and the

people who depend on them. In doing so, we shall continue to exemplify these words from the “Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful” report²:

Decades of land and water stewardship by ranchers, farmers, fishers, hunters, private property owners, conservation organizations, Tribal Nations, territories, State and local governments, and others have demonstrated that the most effective and enduring conservation strategies are those that reflect the priorities, needs, and perspectives of the families and communities that know, live, work, and care for the lands and waters.

Along with millions of Americans – from individual households to states, towns, tribes, and businesses – fishermen have a clear role to play in an energy transition that is long overdue. We are committed to engaging as working partners in this transition by:

- Advocating for rapid expansion of fishery friendly climate solutions, such as rooftop solar, farm-based solutions, low-carbon mobility, energy efficiency, and forest conservation.
- Working together to deploy technologies that reduce our fleets’ and businesses’ own contribution to climate change while reducing the costs of doing business.
- Continuing to advocate extreme caution regarding climate solutions, such as offshore wind, that put ocean ecosystems and fisheries at risk.

America should never have to choose between addressing root causes of climate change and safeguarding the health of fishery ecosystems and the people who depend on them. By embracing fishery friendly climate action, we can do both.

Sincerely,

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Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership

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² U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Council on Environmental Quality. 2021. “Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful.”
<https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/report-conserving-and-restoring-america-the-beautiful-2021.pdf>

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