

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

July 29, 2021

Patrick Keliher
Chair
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Chair Keliher:

I write in advance of the August 4th meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) where you are scheduled to consider adjustments to New York's Black Sea Bass Commercial Allocation. I ask that you increase New York's commercial allocation 2% above the baseline to adequately reflect the increased abundance of black sea bass in the northern portion of its range and specifically in Long Island Sound.

As you know, in March 2021 New York State appealed the commercial black sea bass quota allocation decision made during February's joint ASMFC and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) meeting. New York State argued that although the distribution of black sea bass has changed and the abundance of black sea bass in Long Island Sound has increased, New York's portion of the commercial quota has not been updated to reflect this change. While the ASMFC and MAFMC adjusted other states' quota to accommodate changes in abundance and distribution, similar changes were not made to New York's allocation.

I was pleased to see the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board found New York's appeal was justified and remanded the black sea bass quota allocation decision back to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Management Board) for corrective action.

The Management Board will revise New York's Black Sea Bass commercial quota allocation during the upcoming August ASMFC meeting. I ask that the Management Board consider increasing New York's baseline allocation by 2%, in line with the increase provided to Connecticut. Increasing the baseline allocation would acknowledge the disparity between New York State's allocation and the abundance of black sea bass in Long Island Sound, and increasing the baseline by the same percentage as Connecticut's only makes sense considering the two states share Long Island Sound. Increasing New York's allocation by 2% would better reflect the current distribution and abundance of the resource, and would ensure New York's commercial fishermen receive an equitable proportion of the quota.

I appreciate your consideration of my request. As climate change continues to drive stocks away from historic fishing grounds and as abundance changes, we will need to be adaptive and creative with how we manage our fisheries. I appreciate the willingness this body has already shown to respond to shifting stocks and the needs of the fishermen who depend on these stocks for their livelihoods. I am deeply grateful to the ASMFC for accepting New York State's appeal and will be closely following the outcome of the August meeting.

Thank you for taking the time to carefully consider my request and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Schumer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

CC:

Dr. Chris Moore, the Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council