

F/V DARANA R

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Mr. Rich Fuka
Rhode Island Fisherman's Alliance
P. O. Box 337
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Dear Rich,

I enjoyed talking with you as well as other RIFA members aboard my vessel last Monday. Senator Reed as well as Senator Susan L. & staff were provided with a full description and demonstration of the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program, (NEAMAP), including workup of a survey tow dockside. Having R.I.F.A. members, particularly the active fishermen aboard added a lot of credibility to the project. Whenever local fishermen comment on how a survey catches, mirror what they see daily on the fishing grounds. The scientists aboard and I are satisfied that we are meeting our goals. In my opinion, the NEAMAP Survey in the Rhode Island and Block Island Sounds would not be successful without the expertise of the local fishermen's guidance. Identifying trawling areas that are towable and those non-towable have minimized damage to the survey nets and allowed us to complete all stations in both sounds. These areas are critical to many species and have not been included in the Federal Trawl Survey. Along with guidance on how to trawl these waters, the Alliance and its members have been very supportive and helpful in obtaining acceptable and political support of the NEAMAP project.

I recall having you aboard for a demo trip last fall with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. The weather that day was poor but the Senator enjoyed the trip and was educated on the project by you and other RIFA members on board.

Having completed four years of the NEAMAP Surveys, the acceptance by the Northeast Science Center of the data generated needs to become a standard in the stock assessment process. I would like to thank you and RIFA for your efforts in the support of the NEAMAP program and hope that together we can achieve scientific recommendations of stock abundance that we all have confidence in.

Sincerely,



James A. Ruhle