

Maine Seafood Alliance Directors  
December 8, 2009  
9:30 A.M. Sullivan Town Office  
**Meeting Minutes**

Present: Commissioner George Lapointe, Jim Markos, Dan Rogde, Steve Beatham, Albert carver, Becky Beal, Cecil Wood, Jeff Jewett, Gary Edwards

The meeting was opened by Jim at 9:30 A.M.

As there was no formal agenda the group moved into a Q&A and discussion session with Commissioner Lapointe.

- 👉 Possible disaster funds for Maine- The State has asked for a disaster declaration because of red tide and rain closures during last summer's prime season, As of today there has been no response from the Department, George and our two Senator's staff are trying to track down the request. It was suggested that members might call, send letters or e-mails asking for information about the request to:

Secretary Gary Locke  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20230  
202-482-2000  
[TheSec@doc.gov](mailto:TheSec@doc.gov)

James W. Balsiger, Phd  
Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
NOAA Fisheries Service  
Partnerships & Communications  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-713-2239 x 195  
[jim.balsiger@noaa.gov](mailto:jim.balsiger@noaa.gov)

Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA Administrator  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room 5128  
Washington, DC 20230  
202-482-3436  
[jane.lubchenco@noaa.gov](mailto:jane.lubchenco@noaa.gov)

Discussion with Commissioner Lapointe:

- 👉 Water Quality Closures – Several board members approached the subject of closures due to rain. The general consensus was that after MSA was first established there was an improvement in closure procedures to better reflect local circumstances and weather conditions but that recently things have not gone as well. George indicated that there have been challenges but he believes his staff is getting better at communicating with industry and doing what they can to mitigate/manage closures under the current rules. Another concern with rain closures has to do with MSA's offer to purchase automatic rain gauges for DMR to provide better information during storms. To date DMR staff has not been able to make this happen. George will get back to the board with an answer.
- 👉 Jim asked what the near future may bring with State budget shortfalls.- George said it may not be pretty. He expects the legislature will spend most of the session developing strategies. There is little new legislation in the works. One big concern is that of all DMR programs, Water Quality and Marine Patrol are the biggest and funded for the most part by General Fund appropriations. Everything would seem to be on the table and the idea of consolidating DMR, IF&W, Conservation and Agriculture will surely be looked at.

- 🥓 The question was asked-how well is the shellfish industry heard in the legislature? The answer was “not very well”. George said at this point that MSA is making a difference in Augusta and encouraged the organization to keep at it.
- 🥓 Jim asked if the Marine Resources Committee would remain the same this turn. This is the normal procedure but the next legislature will bring some major changes because of term limits effecting committee leadership.
- 🥓 Steve asked if it would be possible to have DMR and Industry participate in an open forum “think tank” type of discussion. George said it could be done if done reasonably under the right format and ground rules.
- 🥓 Who is on the Shellfish Advisory Council from MSA? Virginia Olsen and Randy Ramsdell
- 🥓 Dan asked about the rock weed harvest. George thinks things are better but acknowledged that there still are concerns.
- 🥓 How do we bring the shellfish industry together? Albert suggested a shellfish festival. There has been some discussion about hosting a state-wide meeting/conference to look at issues and possible solutions within the industry. Most in attendance agreed that the Fishermen’s Forum would not work for this type of conference.
- 🥓 Where does the State stand with FDA- Peter K. is gone and a replacement has not been named. Until that happens DMR will continue to do the best it can to meet compliance.
- 🥓 Dan asked if that recent actions at ISSC could cause a danger to wild harvest. George doesn’t think that will happen but he is concerned about the level of politics within the ISSC project.
- 🥓 Cecil brought up concerns that some harvesters of mahogany clams are exceeding rule limitations on equipment and it may be causing problems for the shell stock. George will look into it and get back to us.

Other Business:

Jeff Jewett from Eastern Maine Mussel was elected to the Board.

Next meeting January 12, 2009.