

2012 -- S 2959

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LC02611
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING A FULL REVIEW OF ALL BUTTERFISH SCIENTIFIC
DATA

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, Sheehan, Algiere, Bates, and Felag

Date Introduced: May 17, 2012

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The fishing industry is a vital part of Rhode Island's economy; and

2 WHEREAS, According to 2010 estimates, the total contributions of Rhode Island
3 landings to the state's economy for all sectors equated to \$150.4 million in sales; \$106.4 million
4 in income; and the employment of 4,968 individuals; and

5 WHEREAS, The Butterfish, *Peprilus triacanthus*, of the Atlantic seaboard is an important
6 species for numerous predators at all of its ages and sizes and is an important marine resource of
7 commerce for the State of Rhode Island; and

8 WHEREAS, Rhode Island lands significant amounts of fish managed by the Mid-Atlantic
9 Fisheries Management Council (Mid-Atlantic), with forty-eight percent of total landings for
10 butterfish; and

11 WHEREAS, The management of butterfish must be done in a timely manner, as the
12 species matures at a younger age than other oceanic species of fishes. By the time an assessment
13 is done, the population may already be past its peak or valley; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2010, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA)
15 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued the status of butterfish stock as "unknown,"
16 due to the fact that biomass reference points could not be specifically determined at the Northeast
17 Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW) 49; and

18 WHEREAS, As a result of a review of partial but not complete scientific evidence by the
19 Mid-Atlantic Council, the NMFS established new 2012 quotas for the butterfish fishery

1 management plan that will have an economically devastating impact on the Rhode Island
2 fisheries industry; now, therefore be it

3 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
4 hereby strongly urges the United States Department of Commerce and the National Marine
5 Fisheries Service (NMFS) to examine all available data and scientific evidence, in collaboration
6 with stakeholders, to reconsider the recommendations in regards to changes in butterfish
7 harvesting quotas; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests the Rhode Island Congressional
9 Delegation's support in urging the Department of Commerce to refrain from issuing specific
10 short-term rules regarding butterfish quotas until all scientific data are thoroughly considered to
11 ensure the evidence supports the recommended quotas; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
13 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Jack Reed and Sheldon
14 Whitehouse, United States Senators, the Honorable James R. Langevin and David N. Cicilline,
15 United States Representatives, the Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce, the
16 Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Acting Director of the
17 the National Marine Fisheries Service.

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