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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION AND SUPPORT FOR ALL RHODE ISLAND FISHERS AND
THE RHODE ISLAND COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, McCaffrey, Sheehan, Euer, and Algieri

Date Introduced: February 06, 2019

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, The United States, with its vast coastlines on two oceans, the arctic seas and
2 the Gulf of Mexico, and its abundant freshwater shorelines along the Great Lakes and our many
3 rivers, reservoirs and other lakes, is among the largest fishing nations in the world, making up
4 approximately fifteen percent of the fishery resources and economic output in the world; and

5 WHEREAS, Commercial fishing makes significant contributions to national, regional
6 and state economies; and

7 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island commercial seafood and fishing industry is a vital part of
8 the State's economy and a leading indicator of the State's economic well-being. Rhode Island's
9 fishing industry catches more than ninety-three million dollars worth of seafood annually with a
10 sales value of two hundred million dollars annually from transactions with processors, dealers,
11 restaurants and grocers. Altogether, the Rhode Island fishing and seafood industry supports
12 approximately 7,889 jobs; and

13 WHEREAS, According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the most dangerous jobs in the
14 United States are in the commercial fishing industry. From 2000 to 2010, the fishing industry's
15 death rate was 31 times greater than the national workplace average. From this same period, 545
16 commercial fishers perished while at sea; and

17 WHEREAS, Despite the dangers inherent in their work, which takes place mainly at sea
18 on moving vessels on a moving surface, every day, in nice or bad weather, in calm or choppy
19 seas, Rhode Island's hard-working fishers work tirelessly and skillfully to attain the food that

1 stocks our stores with fresh seafood and provides our restaurants with the seafood they need to
2 complete their menus; and

3 WHEREAS, Rhode Island fishers toil daily for long hours braving the elements, and
4 often don't know what they will be paid until they land at the dock; and

5 WHEREAS, It takes incredible dedication and skill to catch the seafood we enjoy on our
6 dinner plates from the wild and unpredictable waters of the Atlantic Ocean. "The men and women
7 who work the fisheries of the Atlantic seaboard are as diverse as the fish they seek. They are of
8 all races and ages. Some are first-generation fishers; some come from generations of fishers, often
9 with one or more family-owned boats"; and

10 WHEREAS, Our commercial fishers have been hit by limits on their catches, lower
11 prices for their haul and higher prices for fuel. Combined with the danger of working in the
12 country's least-safe industry, the situation is prompting more fishers, most of whom are small,
13 independent operators, to hang up their nets; and

14 WHEREAS, As a result of this turmoil in their industry, our fishers know how to engage
15 in the complex issues and policymaking processes that impact their businesses. They protect our
16 community and ocean environment, and promote and market local seafood, and pilot sustainable
17 fishing practices; and

18 WHEREAS, Rhode Island's fishing and seafood industry is a crucial component of what
19 makes us the "Ocean State"; now, therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
21 hereby expresses its sincerest admiration and appreciation and utmost respect for all Rhode Island
22 Fishers and the Rhode Island commercial fishing industry; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
24 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Anna Malek Mercer, Executive Director,
25 Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation and Richard L. Fuka, President of the Rhode Island
26 Fisherman's Alliance.

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