



# SEAFOOD HARVESTERS OF AMERICA

FISHERMEN UNITED FOR ACCOUNTABLE AND THRIVING FISHERIES

## A New Administration and Our Nation's Fisheries

Statement from the Seafood Harvesters

Commercial fishing employs over 187,000 Americans and provides \$14.8 billion in economic output. The Seafood Harvesters of America are a unified voice for thousands of small businesses and self-determined fishing families who exercise the privilege of putting delicious, healthful seafood on America's dinner plates.

As harvesters of a public resource we recognize and embrace our stewardship responsibility. We strive for accountability in our fisheries and encourage others to do the same. In doing so we honor both the bounty of our oceans and the many millions of Americans who enjoy seafood.

We know that the only way to ensure a plentiful and lasting seafood harvest for America is through science-based management of our fisheries. By respecting both the letter and the spirit of the Magnuson-Stevens Act – our nation's foundational fisheries law – America's commercial fishermen have played a central role in the remarkable success of U.S. fisheries and a 98% increase in the sustainability of our 199 most important fish stocks. When we focus on accountability in fishing practices and fishery management we make economic success possible, while at the same time working to curb illegal and unregulated seafood imports that put American workers and consumers at risk.

We call on the incoming Trump administration to join us in championing tens of thousands of commercial fishing businesses in this country. And we look forward to working with accountability-focused members of the recreational fishing community as they demonstrate their own commitment to the economic and environmental sustainability of our nation's priceless marine resources.

**"The responsible utility of our nation's resources is an expression of patriotism."** *Chris Brown and Jason DeLaCruz*

*Among White House Champions of Change for Sustainable Seafood*



Jason DeLaCruz (second from left) and Chris Brown (fourth from left) with some of their fellow champions at the White House ceremony

On October 7th, Harvesters' President Chris Brown and member Jason DeLaCruz (Vice President of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance) were among those honored at a White house event as Champions of Change for Sustainable Seafood. This was a terrific event, streamed live worldwide, celebrating fishermen, chefs, industry leaders and NGOs at the cutting edge of sustainable fishing and seafood.

Chris introduced himself by deflecting any credit implied by the award to the many fishermen that he represents, and accepting it on their behalf. In response to a

WINTER 2017

### OUR MISSION /

*As domestic harvesters of an American public resource, we recognize and embrace our stewardship responsibility. We strive for accountability in our fisheries, encourage others to do the same, and speak out on issues of common concern that affect the U.S. commercial fishing industry, the stewardship of our public resources and the many millions of Americans who enjoy seafood.*

### OUR ECONOMIC IMPACT /

*We represent:*  
**Over 3,900 small businesses**

*Direct jobs we support:*  
**19,119**

*Economic output we generate:*  
**\$1.25 billion**

*Income we produce:*  
**\$494 million**

*continued on page 2*

## White House Champions - continued from page 1

panel question about New England fisheries and the challenges presented by changing ocean conditions, Chris had this to say:

*“The next generation of fishermen’s best hope is that we accept accountability as our savior. We have had a rough and rocky relationship with the scientific process. It is well documented, and is perhaps the only thing that is well documented in New England. So, until we can empower the science that determines abundance levels in New England, there isn’t a whole lot of hope for the groundfish-dependent component of our fishery. It’s frightening.*

*“The good news is there are more fish than are known. The bad news is, we don’t have access to them because we have such a poor relationship with the scientific process. You know, catch verification is a necessary component of any fishery. We do not have that. We do not know precisely what is being landed; we do not know precisely what is being discarded. In*

*some cases, discharge assumptions are infinitely higher than the reality we have. So it’s not a one-sided conversation. In short, if you can’t measure it you can’t manage it.*

*“We’re managing for the future. It’s hugely important that we do not lose our horizons and our goals. You know, the average age of a fisherman in New England is about 58 years old, that’s my age. And every time it goes down a number or two it’s because one of the really old guys tipped over. We need to attract youth; we have a responsibility to bring stocks back to where they were when we started.*

*“The responsible utility of our nation’s resources is an expression of patriotism. Fishermen in this country are good Americans. We need to get our act together. We need to force ourselves to bring change upon our fisheries, and bring opportunity to the next generation of people waiting in line.”*

Congratulations to Jason and Chris on their recognition as fishing industry champions!

## Kevin Wheeler named Executive Director

*Brings decades of Hill experience and an impressive background*



Following an extensive recruitment and interview process that involved four highly qualified finalists, Kevin Wheeler was hired in December as the Harvesters’ new executive director.

Kevin comes to the Harvesters after serving ten years as Vice President and Director of Public Affairs at the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (Consortium),

where he was responsible for developing, advocating for and implementing ocean research priorities on behalf of approximately 100 ocean research and educational institutions. In that role he served as primary liaison between the ocean science community and Congress, the executive branch, federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. He and his staff also led advocacy coalitions in support of budgets for federal agencies including NSF, NOAA and DOD.

Prior to his work with the Consortium, Kevin served the National Institutes of Health as a Congressional detailee to the House Committee on Science, where he drafted legislation, developed policy and advised the Chairman of the

committee that exercises oversight responsibilities for NOAA, DOE and EPA, among others.

His background also includes serving as press secretary and legislative assistant in the office of Congressman Sherwood Boehlert, (R-NY).

“Our organization is at an exciting growth stage and we really wanted to get this hire right,” said Harvesters’ President Christopher Brown. “Kevin is extremely well prepared to take our members to a new level of engagement and influence at the federal level. His management experience, his Capitol Hill committee and staff work, and his years at the Consortium are great background, and we could not be happier about welcoming him on board.”

Kevin holds a Bachelor of Science in Political Science (Magna Cum Laude) from the State University of New York, College at Cortland; a Master of Public Policy Analysis and Administration from the State University of New York at Binghamton; and a Master of Environmental Management from Duke University. He lives in Arlington, VA, where he and his wife, Marina are raising two children, Nikolai and Ekaterina.

Please feel free to reach Kevin directly at: [kwheeler@seafoodharvesters.org](mailto:kwheeler@seafoodharvesters.org).

## Our Annual Meeting in Charleston

*Delivering a message of positive potential in the South Atlantic region*

Our annual meeting was held in Charleston, South Carolina this November. It was a pleasure to meet up with our South Atlantic members again while convening fishermen from all points of the compass and holding both a (c)3 and (c)4 board meeting.



*Chris Brown (front left) and South Atlantic Council Executive Director Gregg Waugh (front right) discuss regional fisheries issues*

The two days in Charleston were comprised of a lot of great conversations (including discussions about the final stages of our executive director recruitment process), a meeting with the executive director of the South Atlantic

Fisheries Management Council, initial evaluations of the changing political landscape in Washington, D.C., and some

adjustments to our policy platform. We also managed to eat some of that famous Charleston BBQ and get out on a harbor cruise.

A central aim of the Harvesters is to tell positive stories about commercial fishing to the

American public and policymakers who may know very little about advances in accountable fishing practices and sustainable fisheries management. With that in mind, Harvesters Chris Brown, Jack Cox, Bob Dooley and Will Ward took some time out to visit with the editorial board of the Charleston Post and Courier, and a couple weeks later they ran the following editorial.



*On a harbor cruise in Charleston, the Harvesters were photobombed by an aircraft carrier*

## The Post and Courier

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

### **Harvest Seafood Responsibly - December 3, 2016**

You'd think that the mission of an organization called Seafood Harvesters of America would be to support harvesting seafood. And you'd be right — with a caveat.

The mission is to support fishing sustainably, so that future generations will be able to fish, too.

It will take some effort. For hundreds of years the oceans have provided bounteous seafood — more than enough to satisfy the appetites of commercial and recreational fishermen. So when some species became too sparse and the government imposed limits on them, fishermen bristled.

Still, numerous success stories can be told of species that were in jeopardy being resurrected. And that trend inspired commercial fishermen from the East Coast, West Coast and the Gulf of Mexico to form Seafood Harvesters. The organization recently had a membership meeting in Charleston.

Several of the organization's leaders, all longtime fishermen, told us that commercial boats can make plenty of money and do their part to keep catches sustainable.

One tactic the organization supports is to allow fishing of vulnerable species year-round, but to monitor the catch carefully and to prevent fishing in spawning preserves.

Monitoring can be done electronically to diminish the temptation for fishermen to under-report their catches. Seafood Harvesters would like to make monitoring more cost-effective to use.

California fishermen could be an inspiration for others. In 2010 a number of rockfish species were in peril because of over-fishing. Reasonable limits were imposed, and they have since rebounded fully.

*continued on page 4*

## Harvest Seafood Responsibly - continued from page 3

Seafood Harvesters of America is made up of fishermen, not scientists. But its members have determined that the best way to manage fisheries for the present — and the future — is to be conservationists too and to implement policies that are based on sound science. They have found that it is financially and physically worth modifying their habits as necessary.

The organization wants young people to fish, and believes that they will understand and embrace the need for conservation.

It says people don't have the right to fish. It is a privilege, and it comes with an obligation: Do no harm.

"You don't inherit the ocean from your father, you borrow it from your grandchildren," said Rhode Island fisherman Christopher Brown, president of the organization.

Getting fishermen to recognize the necessity of a sustainable approach can be a challenge.

But it is, as Mr. Brown said, "a matter of enlightened self-interest." In other words, if it's vital for the fish, it's vital for the fishermen.

## Rebecca Skinner new E.D. at AK Whitefish Trawlers



We want to welcome Rebecca Skinner as the new executive director of the Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association. Rebecca replaces Bob Krueger in the role, and will be based in Kodiak.

Rebecca is a practicing attorney in Kodiak, where she is very active in regional politics and fisheries issues. She serves as Deputy Presiding Officer of the Kodiak Borough Assembly, as Co-Chair and Member of the City/Borough Joint Kodiak Fisheries Workgroup, and as the Borough Representative on the Kodiak Fisheries Advisory Committee. A member of the Alaska Bar since 2001, Rebecca also enjoys fishing, sea kayaking, hunting and hiking. Welcome, Rebecca, and thank you, Bob, for all your support since our inception!

## Bob Dooley and Jack Cox nominated for Seafood Champion Award

Harvesters' founding members Jack Cox and Bob Dooley have both been nominated as potential recipients of 2017 Seafood Champion awards, presented by SeaWeb, a project of the Ocean Foundation.

The Seafood Champion Awards annually recognize individuals and companies for outstanding leadership in promoting environmentally responsible seafood.

Jack began fishing in the snapper-grouper fishery at age 15 in order to pay bills and put himself through college. As the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery declined, he came to understand that fishery management determines the trajectory of fish stocks as well as the future of both commercial and



Bob Dooley



Jack Cox

## Seafood Champion Award - continued from page 4

recreational fisheries. Throughout his career as a fisherman, a small-fleet owner and seafood marketer, Jack has increased both his leadership capacity and his profile. At the same time, he spends countless hours on the docks of North and South Carolina ports, talking with fishermen about the failures of past fishery management structures and thoughtfully communicating his vision of the future.

In addition to his service on the Harvesters' board, Jack has served on the North Carolina Finfish Committee and the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. He has participated on numerous industry committees and taken part in multiple fly-ins to lobby members of Congress on sustainable fisheries issues. He is a member of Carteret Catch, a local "sea to table" organization in Morehead City, NC, and co-owner of Blue Ocean Seafood Market, which supplies 40 local restaurants and provides fresh, local seafood to retail consumers.

Currently, Jack's working to develop an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP). If approved, the EFP will enable a small group of fishermen to pilot accountable fishing practices and demonstrate management alternatives for the snapper-grouper fishery. One of their primary goals is the dramatic reduction of

"regulatory discards" – perfectly good fish that fishermen are required to throw back throughout much of their season.

Bob Dooley got his first fishing job at age 11, out of his hometown of Half Moon Bay, CA, and he's been advocating for sustainable fishing practices since the early 1980's. Bob played leadership roles in the development of cooperative fisheries structures in West Coast and Alaska pollock, cod and whiting fisheries. He has testified before Congress on MSA reauthorization, done extensive research and testing on gear modifications for bycatch avoidance, and serves on numerous steering committees concerning initiatives in electronic monitoring and community outreach on fisheries issues. Bob's counsel was instrumental in formative meetings of the Seafood Harvesters when he was serving as president of United Catcher Boats, and he continues as a very active member, advising the board on a variety of topics. Recently he served on the Hiring Committee that selected our new executive director.

Whether or not they make the final cut in the Seafood Champions award process – announcements in the spring – both Jack and Bob are champs in our book, and they have our thanks for their continued leadership in our industry.

### ***The F/V Wizard***



*The Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers are one of our founding member-organizations. Here is one of their well-known member vessel, the F/V Wizard, heading into the Bering Sea with a full load of crab pots. Stay safe out there, everybody!*

## Our Member Organizations



### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS AND STAFF**

**President** - Chris Brown,  
Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's  
Association

**Vice President** - Will Ward,  
Gulf Fishermen's Association

**Secretary/Treasurer** - Keith "Buddy"  
Guindon, Gulf of Mexico Reef  
Shareholders Alliance

**Board Member** - Brent Paine,  
United Catcher Boats

**Board Member** - Jack Cox,  
South Atlantic Fishermen's Association

**Board Member** - Buck Laukitis,  
North Pacific Fisheries Association

**Staff** - Kevin Wheeler,  
Executive Director

*Big Thanks to our  
Associate Members*

*Ocean Marine Insurance Agency*

*Northern Enterprise Boat Yard*

*Bulletproof Nets*

*Coal Point Seafoods*

*Gardener Boat Repair*

*Alaskan Observers, Inc.*

*Puget Sound Hydraulics, Inc*

*Fish for America USA*

**Seafood Harvesters of America**

**P.O. Box 66265**

**Washington D.C. 20035**

**(202) 888-2733**