



# PRESS RELEASE

## Recreational Fishing Alliance

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### **ELECTED OFFICIALS CALL FOR NOAA CHIEF'S OUSTER RFA's Jim Donofrio Expected To Continue Theme At Miami Conference**

As reported recently, and rather repeatedly in the Gloucester Times out of Massachusetts, a growing cadre of New England legislators is calling on President Obama to replace NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco.

Not one to keep his opinions in check, Jim Donofrio, executive director of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) told the Gloucester Times, "This is the most corrupt administration in modern history."

On Monday, October 3, a Senate Subcommittee Field Hearing was held in a packed Massachusetts State House. The highly-charged hearing was chaired by Senator John Kerry (D-MA) and focused primarily on NOAA's controversial catch share program, the embattled NOAA Administrator Dr. Lubchenco, and NOAA's troubled Office of Law Enforcement which officials claim misused fines and legal fees paid by members of the commercial fishing sector.

Other coastal legislators who participated in the hearing included Senator Mark Begich (D-AK), Senator Scott Brown (R-MA), Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), Congressman John Tierney (D-MA), Congressman Bill Keating (D-MA), and Massachusetts State Senate President, Therese Murray (D-Plymouth).

According to journalist Richard Gaines, "After what he described as evasion and equivocation by Jane Lubchenco at a U.S. Senate Commerce Committee hearing, New Bedford Mayor Scott Lang is calling on President Obama to replace the NOAA administrator." The Times report referenced a prepared statement released by Lang explaining how Lubchenco's testimony crushed the last hopes he had for her to be able to effectively lead on fishery concerns.

Lang is not the first elected official to call for Lubchenco's removal as head of NOAA. A year ago, the Massachusetts delegation of Rep. Frank and Rep. Tierney joined with Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC) in giving a thumbs down to the Obama appointee to NOAA, though Rep. Frank later backed down from the call.

After the recent Senate Subcommittee Field Hearing from which Lubchenco skipped out early allegedly to meet with editors at the Boston Globe, Rep. Frank said in a taped interview that he had backed off the demand for Lubchenco's sacking in the middle of last year because the White House had assured him it would be possible to "get things done around her."

According to the Gloucester Times, Congressman Frank has conceded that he no longer believes that's the case.

Sen. Brown who organized the hearing into NOAA law enforcement and spending priorities last June, described Lubchenco's performance as the "political hoojie woojie," and complained that NOAA has yet to produce a ream of documents he, with Kerry's support, had asked for last June. In one particular volley with Dr. Lubchenco, Sen. Brown actually asked "what does it take to get fired at NOAA?"

"I was extremely disappointed in the lack of clear responses from Administrator Lubchenco, as well as the contempt she displayed in answering questions from elected officials with oversight of NOAA," Sen. Brown said in a follow-up statement to the Times about Lang's call for her ouster.

After rebuffing angry legislators from commercial fishing districts in New England, Dr. Lubchenco is taking her road show south this week to Miami, FL where she's hoping to find a less scrutinizing audience when the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) hosts their 21st Annual Conference at the University of Miami.

According to RFA's Donofrio, the audience may be more accommodating to the NOAA Chief's agenda, but the calls for her ouster will still be a topic of discussion.

"How can we expect the head of NOAA to be unbiased in her approach to fisheries management or open to the concerns of coastal fishermen when she's carrying water for the Environmental Defense Fund," Donofrio said. A chair and trustee at Environmental Defense Fund when appointed by President Obama to be NOAA Administrator in 2009, Dr. Lubchenco has overseen a massive movement over to a privatized fisheries scheme which sources say has cost the economy \$400 million and some 1,000 jobs.

"Clearly Environmental Defense Fund is driving the catch share process in America, and instead of answering to those legislators elected by the people to guide American policy, Dr. Lubchenco is running her own policy department as if she were a czar," Donofrio said.

"Dr. Lubchenco may think she is above the law and beyond Congressional reproach, but our coastal anglers will not go away no matter how hard she tries," he said.

This Friday, October 21 from 9 a.m. until 10:30 a.m., both Donofrio and Dr. Lubchenco will have their points heard as the two will share a panel together at the SEJ conference in Miami. In an hour-and-a-half discussion titled Opening Plenary – Fish Fight to be moderated by Washington Post environmental reporter Juliet Eilperin, Donofrio and Lubchenco will join other panelists including commercial fishing representative Nils Stolpe and marine scientists Daniel Pauly and Steve Gaines to "grapple with the question: have we reached the limits of the sea's abundance, or is there more beneath the waves?"

A fierce critic of Dr. Lubchenco and her fierce efforts to privatize the nation's coastal fisheries through a catch share policy designed to cap fishing participation and trade away ownership of fish stocks to a few well-appointed recipients, Donofrio said he hopes that environmental journalists assembled in Miami this week will be open to hearing a point of view which has been widely suppressed by the astroturfing efforts of Environmental Defense Fund.

"Dr. Lubchenco has already conceded that certain fisheries provisions today have no scientific basis, so I hope the journalists in Miami can see past the doom and gloom for a moment to see the fact that our coastal fisheries for the most part have improved significantly in this country," said Donofrio.

"Fishermen aren't trying to catch the last fish, we're simply trying to make sure our members aren't the last Americans able to catch a few fish," he added.

(See more at [www.gloucestertimes.com](http://www.gloucestertimes.com) and [www.gloucestertimes.com/fishing](http://www.gloucestertimes.com/fishing))

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*The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. RFA's Mission is to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine, boat and tackle industry jobs, and ensure the long-term sustainability of our Nation's saltwater fisheries. For more information, call 888-JOIN-RFA or visit [www.joinrfa.org](http://www.joinrfa.org).*