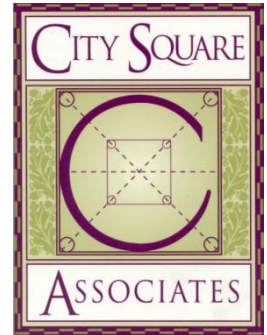


# Public Opinion on Fishing in New England

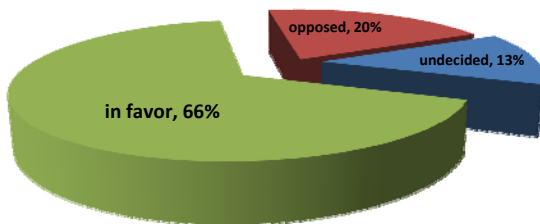
## Executive Summary

A survey on voter attitudes toward overfishing and Amendment 16 was commissioned by the Pew Environment Group and was carried out by City Square Associates, Inc., a research and consulting firm in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The following is a summary of the main findings.



Research & Consulting

### 1. Voters overwhelmingly support a new management system



Maine and Massachusetts Voters' Opinion of A16

"... a new management system has been proposed that sets specific annual catch limits for each threatened species of fish. these limits are based on what the best available science says is necessary to restore fish populations. Based on what I've told you so far, would you be . . ."

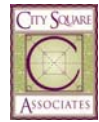
Two-thirds of voters in Maine and Massachusetts favor "a new management system . . . that sets specific annual catch limits . . . based on what the best available science says is necessary to restore fish populations." Support is especially strong in the Bay State where seventy percent of voters are in favor of the plan, and more than a third of them *strongly* support it.

### 2. Voters know and care about New England's shrinking fish stocks

Over three-quarters of voters say they had been "aware that overfishing has become a problem in New England" even before being contacted for the survey. And, of those aware of the problem, nine out of ten think it's important that something be done to solve it. Support for addressing the issue is consistent in Maine and Massachusetts and across demographic groups, with residents in non-coastal counties as interested in finding a solution as ones residing near the coast, and non-seafood consumers as interested as the fish-lovers.

### 3. People want fish for their children and grandchildren

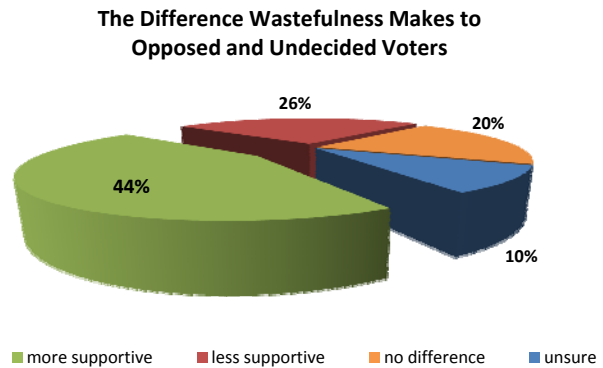
Voters in Massachusetts and Maine favor a new approach to the management of New England's ocean fisheries, principally as a function of their desire that future generations be able "to enjoy delicious and healthful native wild fish." The fear that their children and grandchildren might wind up deprived of fish like cod, haddock, and flounder is clearly a



concern. Some are also moved by the idea of preserving New England’s seafaring history and the concept of reconciling the interests of conservationists and fishermen.

#### 4. Wastefulness of current management system changes minds

Nearly half of voters indicate that their support of a new approach is strengthened by the knowledge that the current days-at-sea approach often results in the dumping of hundreds of pounds of fish. This consideration is persuasive even to a plurality of opposed and undecided voters, forty-four percent of whom said that finding out about the wastefulness of the present system makes them more supportive of a new approach to fisheries management.



*“If you knew that, because of limits on the quantity of fish they are permitted to bring home per trip, fishermen under the current system are sometimes forced to dump hundreds of pounds of fish overboard before returning to port, would that make you . . .”*

#### 5. Voters embrace the ideas of community-based cooperatives and basic fairness

Amendment 16’s reliance on community-based, fishermen-run cooperatives to determine when and how they will harvest their share of the catch resonates strongly with voters. A majority of those polled (including a plurality of the opposed and undecided) say that the latitude given to the cooperatives by the new plan makes them more inclined to favor it. Moreover, voters want to see the same science-based, species-specific standards that govern the cooperatives applied to fishermen who have not joined a cooperative as well.

#### 6. Government seen as an honest broker

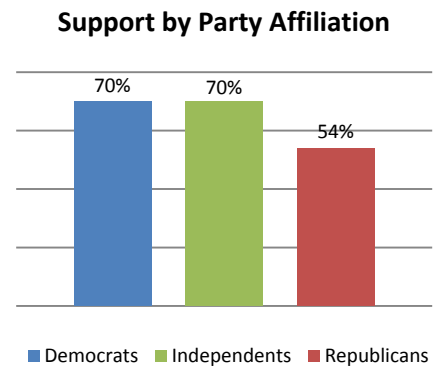
For a plurality of Maine and Massachusetts voters, government entities (i.e., federal and state agencies) are the most trusted sources for accurate information on the topic of fishery management. And in assessing the potential threats to the future of fish stocks and the fishing industry in New England, less than a third of voters point to government regulation as a problem. With fishermen and conservationists sometimes viewed as promoting



conflicting interests, most voters in both states are predisposed to view the government as an honest broker in rebuilding fish stocks.

### 7. Independents aligned with Democrats in their support of change

Given that Democrats and unaffiliated voters together comprise the vast majority of the electorate in both Maine and Massachusetts, it is significant that Independents side overwhelmingly with Democrats on this particular issue. Democrats and Independents alike are more likely than Republicans to be aware of the problem, to consider the problem serious, and to consider it a priority to address.



*Methodology: The survey was conducted by telephone, among a random sample of 750 voters in Maine and Massachusetts (375 in each state), over a seven day period that began on April 16, 2009. For the purposes of this poll, a "voter" was any adult 18+ who answered "Yes" to the following question: "To the best of your recollection, did you vote in the last election, in November 2008?" The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.6 percentage points. The complete questionnaire and a more detailed description of study method are available from the Pew Environment Group upon request.*