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END OVERFISHING

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Examples of Cooperative Research Programs that Could Benefit from S. 3528, the Coastal Jobs Creation Act of 2010

Cooperative research programs use fishermen, operating under the direction of government scientists, to collect fisheries research information. These programs provide a cost-effective way to improve the data that informs fishery management, offer financial relief to struggling fishermen and build partnerships among scientists and fishermen. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has conducted a cooperative research program since 1999 and funding has ranged from \$2 million to \$17 million per year. Below are examples of existing cooperative research programs that could benefit from S. 3528:

Northeast Cooperative Research¹

Since 1999, NMFS has funded two cooperative research programs on the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank – the Northeast Consortium (NEC), managed by the University of New Hampshire, and the Northeast Cooperative Research Partners Program (NCRPP). Projects include development of environmentally-friendly fishing gear, collection of biological and stock status data for stock assessments and outreach to fishermen. NCRPP conducts cod tagging and directly surveys fishermen and seafood dealers. To date, NEC and NCRPP together have provided roughly \$55M for research involving over 700 commercial fishing vessel owners and captains (and a nearly equal number of crew), and 100 industry or shore-side businesses. Unfortunately, reduced federal funding has reduced capacity to conduct these programs.²

Southeast Cooperative Research³

The Southeast Regional Office of NMFS currently facilitates two different cooperative research programs, the Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN) and the Cooperative Research Program (CRP). Each receives roughly \$2 million to collect information necessary for stock assessment of priority species. Projects conducted under the CRP program include data collection on fish and other ocean wildlife caught by commercial fishermen, research on the impacts of Marine Protected Areas, and the amount and fate of wildlife that are discarded in commercial fisheries.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Cooperative Research Surveys⁴

In 2008, LDWF received \$18.8 million from NMFS for cooperative research programs as part of a grant authorized for fisheries disaster assistance to monitor recovery of Gulf fisheries impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and Gustav and Ike in 2008. One program, The Cooperative Research Surveys, compensates qualified Louisiana resident wholesale/retail seafood dealers and commercial fishermen who complete surveys, which ask questions such as trip length, abundance of catch, business figures, and comparisons to the previous year. Information about NOAA's National Cooperative Research Program is available here: <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st4/NationalCooperativeResearchCoordination.html>.

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¹ Northeast Consortium and National Sea Grant College Program, *A Decade of Discovery: Collaborative Research in the Gulf of Maine: A report on the 2008 Collaborative Research Visioning Project*, pp. 8-9, http://www.northeastconsortium.org/docs/2009/CVRP_Final_Report.pdf.

² Gulf of Maine Research Institute, *Cooperative Research in the Northeast: A Strategic Direction for 2010-2014*, pp.7-8: http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/CR_NE_StratDir2010-14Final.pdf .

³ NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office, Cooperative Research Program: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/grants/crp.htm>.

⁴ Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, *Cooperative Research Surveys for Commercial Fishermen and Dealers*: <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/marinedisasterrecovery/cooperativeresearchprogram.cfm>.