

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to request unanimous consent to submit the following written statement into the record today.

Fishing is a cornerstone of coastal life, supporting jobs, feeding families, and connecting generations. In the fishing communities of Massachusetts' North Shore that I represent, the fishing industry is not only embedded in our economy, providing jobs and supporting shoreside businesses, but it is a cultural icon that forms our very identity. In fact, the mascot for Gloucester High School is no less than, "The Fishermen."

A life on the water, dedicated to harvesting a healthy catch for our families, is not just a livelihood, but a calling. Generations have been called to this singular way of life. And, to keep this vital industry strong, we must invest in the fishermen of today– and tomorrow.

I am pleased that the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries is considering my bipartisan bill today to reauthorize the Young Fishermen's Development Act for another five years. This common-sense measure deserves swift passage. The Young Fishermen's Development Grant program has always enjoyed bipartisan support, and I am proud that it boasts cosponsors from both parties and coasts. I am especially thankful to Representative Begich from Alaska for being such a strong bipartisan partner in this effort.

The Young Fishermen's Development Grant program helps train the next generation of commercial fishermen by providing grants for local education, outreach, and hands-on learning. It's a smart investment in our working waterfronts and the people who make them thrive.

As the Representative for Gloucester, Massachusetts – America's oldest fishing port – I am particularly proud that the Young Fishermen's Development Grants recently funded a \$400,000 grant to the New England Young Fishermen's Alliance. This grant is helping young fishermen in New England receive critical vocational training, develop into skilled deckhands, and transition into the wheelhouse as captains.

Similar projects all over the country are helping to train the next generation of fishermen. These grants help our coastal communities thrive by giving new opportunities to young people, helping fishermen get out on the water, and maintaining a local supply of fresh seafood.

The Committee should do its part to extend the program through 2031, so that we can keep this good work going. And of course, we should continue to secure funding for the program so that we can help the next generation get started.

Investing in young fishermen means protecting the future of our food supply and our coastal economies. The Committee has a wonderful opportunity to promote this approach in today's hearing and by its continued support for the Young Fishermen's Development Act.

Thank you for your time and for your support of this bill. I look forward to continuing to work with you all to advance this legislation.