

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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THE GOVERNOR

NO. 03 FY 04/05
03 FY 04/05
DATE August 22, 2003

**AN ORDER CREATING THE TASK FORCE ON THE MAINE
GROUNDFISH INDUSTRY**

WHEREAS, the groundfish industry of the State of Maine is a vital component of the economy of the State and our coastal communities and heritage; and

WHEREAS, Maine relies on healthy groundfish stocks for recreational and commercial use; and

WHEREAS, the long-term health of the groundfish resource is critical to sustaining the State's working waterfronts; and

WHEREAS, Maine has experienced a fifty-one percent decline in its groundfish fleet since 1994, and the industry has experienced additional stresses, including those caused by the pending implementation of the updated Northeast Multispecies Management Plan known as Amendment 13; and

WHEREAS, current trends in groundfish biomass are signaling hope that groundfish stocks can be significantly rebuilt; and

WHEREAS, Maine must plan ahead for the effects of Amendment 13 and for a future day when groundfish stocks have returned to abundance;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of Maine, do hereby establish the TASK FORCE ON THE MAINE GROUNDFISH INDUSTRY (hereinafter "Task Force").

Mission

The mission of the Task Force is to formulate recommendations about how best to rebuild groundfish stocks, and preserve and enhance Maine's groundfishing industry in the face of significant challenges and changes. To that end, the Task Force shall:

1. Weigh the short-term impacts of Amendment 13 and devise strategies that will preserve Maine's existing fleet and infrastructure;
2. Develop recommendations for a long-term plan to position Maine's fleet for future prosperity;
3. Contemplate the future composition of the fleet, and determine how the historic diversity, character, and existing geographical opportunities may be maintained;
4. Evaluate the future role of the Portland Fish Exchange, and ascertain how the benefits of the Exchange to the industry may be maintained;
5. Consider the future role of the Department of Marine Resources, including determining what new services, research, surveys, and stock assessments should be provided, and how those services should be funded;
6. Assess the future role of the State, including contemplating ways the State can further support the harvesting, processing, and distribution of groundfish;
7. Consider the future role of an industry coalition, and determine what might be accomplished by the industry if it works together across sectors;
8. Provide preliminary recommendations to the Department of Marine Resources for consideration at the Governor's Natural Resource-based Industries Summit; and
9. Submit recommendations to the Governor regarding strategies to rebuild, preserve, and enhance the long-term sustainability of the Maine groundfish industry.

Organization of the Task Force

The Task Force shall be composed of twelve (12) members, who will be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Governor. Those members appointed by the Governor will be broadly representative of the groundfish industry and will include fishermen, processors, managers, attorneys, and business people. In addition, the President of the Maine Senate and the Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives each may appoint one (1) member to the Task Force, who both will serve at the pleasure of their respective appointers.

The Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, or his designee, also shall be a member of the Task Force.

The Governor will designate a member to serve as Chair of the Task Force, who will preside at, set the agenda for, and schedule Task Force meetings.

Deadline for Recommendations

The Task Force shall submit its recommendations, along with any legislation needed to implement the recommendations, to the Governor on or before February 1, 2004. The Task Force, and the authority of this Executive Order, will dissolve on July 1, 2004.

Meetings

The Task Force shall meet as often as necessary to complete its assigned tasks. All meetings shall be open to the public and held in locations determined by the Task Force.

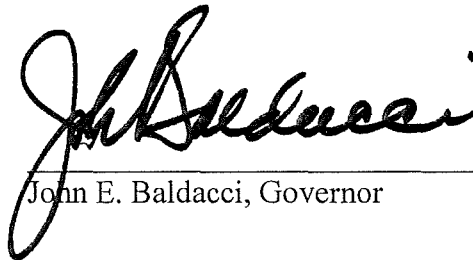
Prior to submitting its recommendations to the Governor, the Task Force shall hold a public hearing to entertain comments on the draft recommendations.

Staffing/Funding

The Department of Marine Resources shall provide staff support to the Task Force, drawing on existing resources. The Department may utilize its existing authority to accept contributions and donations of money, services, and supplies to support the work of the Task Force.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is August 22, 2003.



John E. Baldacci, Governor