

Christie administration requests fishery disaster declaration

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The Christie administration on Tuesday, Nov. 13 requested a federal disaster declaration for New Jersey's commercial and fishing industries, which sustained significant revenue losses and damages to its fleet and infrastructure as a result of Hurricane Sandy.

Gov. Christie made the request for a declaration of a federal fisheries resource disaster to Acting Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank.

"The storm resulted in significant losses for the industry, damaging or destroying vessels, ports, facilities, and equipment. It also left coastal areas that the industry needs severely damaged or inaccessible," Christie said of New Jersey's \$2.7 billion commercial and recreation fishing industries. " This declaration will help the fishing industry obtain immediate disaster relief assistance and help them cope during this time of great economic loss and hardship."

Christie said he has seen many of these storm-damaged facilities during his post-storm tours of the coast, including warehouses, vessels, offices, aquaculture facilities and equipment.

"The fishing industry has been hard hit and needs our help," Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin said. "This federal disaster declaration will be the first step in the road to recovery for these industries that are so important to the identity and economy of the shore."

A federal fishery disaster declaration would trigger financial support from the Economic Development Administration and would aid in securing disaster relief for impacted aspects of the industry, including commercial fishing operations, charter fishing operators, processors and owners of related fishery infrastructure affected by the disaster.

The U.S. Department of Commerce is expected to begin a review of the request, while the Department of Environmental Protection works with the National Marine Fisheries Service to determine impacts and assess damages.

In 2011, New Jersey's commercial fishing industry landed roughly 175 million pounds of

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seafood, generating over \$1.3 billion in economic activity. The economic impact of recreational fishing also supports approximately 8,500 jobs and \$1.4 billion in annual sales.

To view the request online see http://www.nj.gov/dep/docs/fishery_letter.pdf

See also [FEMA details how to access storm relief.](#)