



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

## Zeldin: Let's Complete Trifecta for Long Island Fishing Industry

LEE M. ZELDIN December 17, 2011

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### *DEC Considers Lowering Minimum Size Limit for Fluke*

Ronkonkoma, NY – State Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R, C, I- Shirley) and fishing industry leaders today hailed the announcement by Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officials, that New York State may reduce the size limit for fluke for the upcoming recreational fluke fishing season.

The current size limit for fluke caught recreationally in New York State waters is 20.5 inches. The 2012 fluke season may see a reduction in that limit to 19.5 or maybe even 19 inches.

“This would deliver a desperately needed Trifecta of Victories for the Long Island fishing industry,” said Senator Zeldin, who spent much of his childhood fishing for fluke on the Great South Bay. “First, we repealed the saltwater fishing license fee. Then we eliminated the MTA Payroll Tax for all of our Bait and Tackle shops and charter fishing boats. Now, hopefully, the state will complete the Trifecta by reducing the minimum size limit for fluke.”

“I would like to commend DEC Chief of Marine Resources Jim Gilmore for his hard work advocating for a reduction in the minimum size limit,” continued Senator Zeldin. “Between the hard work of Governor Cuomo, the DEC and many of my new legislative colleagues on

Long Island, it looks like the stars are finally in line for us to deliver a much needed turnaround for the Long Island fishing community.”

“To see the same early May to late September fluke season with a more reasonable size limit of 19 inches would be ideal for our New York anglers and would finally provide an opportunity for folks to take home a few fish for the table in 2012,” said Jim Hutchinson, managing director of the Recreational Fishing Alliance and president of the New York Sportfishing Alliance. “The federal fisheries agency needs to be more responsible with their data collection on behalf of our anglers and business owners, but we’re certainly thankful for the efforts of Sen. Zeldin for ensuring that the accuracy of that data from our state angler registry doesn’t come at an additional cost to the individual anglers. I’d like to think that the federal government is doing a better job of adequately balancing commerce with conservation at the state level, but for now we’ll just keep our fingers crossed.”

“The proposal to reduce the size limit to 19 or 19 1/2 inches is a very positive step in rejuvenating the saltwater recreational fishing industry on Long Island,” said John Mantione, spokesman for the New York Fishing Tackle Trade Association (NYFTTA).

“Recreational fishing is still a viable sport and a very important component in helping to recover Long Island's economy. NYFTTA believes that the reduction in size limits for 2012 will help us and, in turn, help New York State. We are greatly encouraged that size limits will be reduced for the 2012 fluke season, and hope that this trend in relaxation of fishery regulations continues. Every step taken to remove or reduce unnecessary regulations benefits New York's anglers, the fishing industry at large and New York State.”

“If we get a reduction in fluke size limits to 19" or 19.5" for the 2012 season, this would be a desperately needed boost to all party boat and charter boat captains in New York's Marine and Coastal District,” said Dennis Kanyuk, President of United Boatmen of New York. “We have been laboring under ridiculous size limits in New York for several years, and many

party and charter businesses have unfortunately been lost due to these egregious regulations. Fluke have always been a mainstay of our industry, and for those of us that have managed to survive the recent regulatory attacks against our industry, this is a breath of fresh air and a hint of new hope that we can save our businesses from ultimate failure.”

“The 20.5 inch limit is an enormous, unfair and unreasonable burden for recreational fishing on Long Island,” concluded Zeldin. “By reducing this limit, more people will be encouraged to shop at Long Island’s Bait and Tackle shops, frequent charter fishing boats, and enjoy the precious treasures of Long Island’s waterways.”