

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 30, 2018

RDML Tim Gallaudet, Ph.D., USN Ret.  
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Gallaudet,

The Gulf of Maine is currently warming faster than almost any other body of water on Earth. Recent research has shown that waters of record high temperature are entering the Gulf, and these changes pose long-term threats to the balance of conditions that have fostered such a historically healthy, productive ocean ecosystem. To help better understand, prepare for, and adapt to these changes, we respectfully request that NOAA take a leadership role in prioritizing the Gulf of Maine as an area of study.

The new warm waters flowing into the Gulf of Maine are starkly different from the cold and nutrient-rich currents that have supported this unique marine ecosystem for so long. Researchers have speculated that this influx is likely due to broader climate changes that are increasing the flow of melt-water from the Arctic and reducing the intensity of the Gulf Stream. Regardless of the source, its implications are clear and dire for the health of the marine species that inhabit the Gulf and for the future of fisheries that depend on them.

While the Gulf of Maine is already the subject of significant interest and research, we believe the scale and complexity of the changes occurring therein merit even greater attention. We need greater resources, enhanced monitoring of subsurface conditions, and a better understanding of the diversity of factors that are simultaneously impacting the Gulf of Maine, from the changes in circulation and water temperature to ocean acidification.

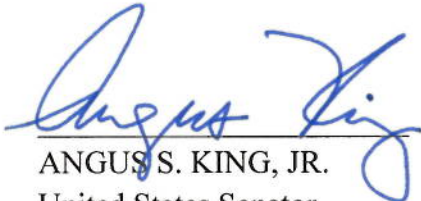
To this end, we also urge you to engage in greater cooperative efforts between the United States and Canada to study these issues. The currents coming into the Gulf of Maine come from both US and Canadian waters, and the impacts of these changes will be felt in both countries. In this most recent study, the temperature anomalies were recorded by Canadian scientists through monitoring efforts done in conjunction with the Canadian Coast Guard. Combining resources to achieve the common goal of better understanding these change ocean conditions would serve us well.

This effort is critical, not just for Maine and the New England states but for our country as a whole. While the Gulf of Maine is currently undergoing a period of rapid change, it is not the

only place where we will be confronted with these challenges. Understanding the changes occurring in the Gulf of Maine with respect to warming ocean waters will allow us to better understand the impact to fisheries and benefit other waters similarly affected by climate change.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



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ANGUS S. KING, JR.  
United States Senator



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SUSAN M. COLLINS  
United States Senator