

## *Advocacy Submits Comments on Atlantic Herring Specifications*

On November 10, 2009, the Office of Advocacy submitted a letter to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration regarding the specifications for the Atlantic herring fishery. A copy of Advocacy's comments can be found at [www.sba.gov/advo/laws/comments](http://www.sba.gov/advo/laws/comments).

- In June 2009, the Transboundary Resources Assessment Committee (TRAC) performed a stock assessment. As a result of the TRAC report, the Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) set the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) at 90,000 MT, which reduced the current ABC by more than 50 percent. However, the SSC recognized that there is substantial uncertainty in the June 2009 assessment; the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) has stated that the herring fishery is not overfished and that the data from the TRAC assessment was questionable.
- Reducing the ABC by greater than 50 percent may have a devastating effect on small businesses in the herring fishery, the lobster fishers who rely on herring for bait, and the small communities from New Jersey to Maine that are dependent on the fish stock for economic vitality.
- Advocacy stated that employing a wider range of scientific information is necessary to ensure that unnecessary economic harm is not visited on small entities. Advocacy encouraged National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to perform a new benchmark assessment for the Atlantic herring fishery. Advocacy further encouraged NMFS to extend the 2009 specifications to 2010 in the meantime and to utilize maximum flexibility in considering alternatives.

For more information, visit Advocacy's webpage at [www.sba.gov/advo](http://www.sba.gov/advo) or contact Jennifer Smith at 202-205-6943.