

**OCTOBER 10, 2023**

## Making a Splash: Reed Delivers \$500,000 for RI Fisheries Research

**NARRAGANSETT, RI** – Rhode Island’s commercial fisheries and seafood sectors account for more than 4,300 jobs and drive \$420 million in statewide economic impact, according to a joint Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation-University of Rhode Island study.

In an effort to help ensure continued growth and sustainability of Rhode Island’s commercial fishing sector amidst evolving challenges with ocean health, U.S. Senator Jack Reed today delivered a \$500,000 federal earmark to finance a deep dive study that will help the Ocean State’s commercial fishermen.

Senator Reed joined David Bethoney, PhD, Executive Director of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF); local fishermen; and research collaborators at Point Judith’s Superior Trawl facility to celebrate this federal funding that will advance and enhance the organization’s efforts to understand, manage, and develop innovative solutions to challenges faced by commercial fishermen.

“As climate change rapidly alters the coastal landscape and oceans, we’ve got to support our commercial fishermen and help them adapt while also taking good care of our commercial fisheries. The well-being of both our fishermen and fisheries is critical to the Blue Economy and our economic future,” said Senator Reed. “CFRF research is critical to resilient and sustainable fisheries and ensuring commercial fishermen have a voice and a say when it comes to policies that impact their livelihoods. This new funding will deepen our understanding of modern ocean challenges. The data collected by CFRF and their partners will be used to ensure commercial fishermen have appropriate access rights and develop innovative solutions to ensure our commercial fisheries are healthy, resilient, and can thrive.”

“We are excited and grateful for this opportunity to build on initiatives that empower the commercial fishing community to help us understand and address significant change in the ocean environment,” said David Bethoney, PhD, Executive Director of CFRF.

With this federal earmark, CFRF will leverage and grow cooperative research efforts on issues affecting fishermen in Rhode Island and across southern New England. This work will utilize the knowledge of local fishermen to better understand and mitigate challenges facing the fishing sector, like climate change, rapidly warming waters, and plastic pollution. Specifically, CFRF will use these federal funds to:

- Modernize its Shelf Research Fleet initiative;
- Add juvenile black seabass monitoring to the Black Seabass Research Fleet;
- Create an informed implementation strategy for automatic squid jigging, and;
- Continue ghost gear removal from Rhode Island waters.

Additionally, CFRF plans to invite more local fishermen to participate in these research initiatives, creating a path for fishermen to supplement and diversify their incomes. For example, the Shelf Research Fleet has included 18 fishermen since the project first started to collect profiles of water temperature and salinity at two-week intervals across the continental shelf. This research effort has already identified an increase in bottom intrusions of warm, salty water that may have gone undetected without their monitoring.

A senior member of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Reed secured this \$500,000 earmark in the fiscal year 2023 consolidated appropriations law. The funding will be administered by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Earlier this year, Senator Reed also delivered [\\$2.4 million](#) to build a new shellfish hatchery and research center that will support the Ocean State’s aquaculture and seafood industries. This project is a collaboration between the University of Rhode Island and Matunuck Oyster Farm.

The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation is a nonprofit established by commercial fishermen to conduct collaborative fisheries research and to carry out education projects.