Phillip A. Edwards  
Chairman American EEL Board.  

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201

Request to the ASMFC concerning stock enhancement and quota increase for Maine’s Glass Eel fishery under Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel.

Commissioners,

For two centuries dams blocked or delayed up and downstream passage for diadromous fish species on the Penobscot River. Since 2012 several large restoration projects have improved up and downstream passage into this watershed (summary attached).

With these improvements, American eels (throughout their life stages), now face reduced migratory delay and safer up and downstream movement. The Maine Elver Fisherman Association, a membership organization of commercial glass eel harvesters, estimates that an average of 25,000,000 glass eels enter the Penobscot each year. In recent years, fishermen antidotaly report larger returns on the Penobscot and nearby waters. These large runs are often observed after fishermen have filled their annual quotas on other waterways across the state.

We believe that the restoration work of the past decade has not only improved conditions for glass eels' movement within the Penobscot but also acts as a stock enhancement activity for American eels. We believe these enhancements, all having occurred after January 1, 2011, satisfy section 3.1.1 of Addendum IV to the “Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel”. We respectfully request that the Commission considers adjusting Maine’s annual glass eel harvest quota in response to the last decade's worth of restoration and stock enhancement activities on the Penobscot River.

Any increase in available quota will not impact the State of Maine’s robust system of monitoring annual individual and State catches.

Restoration work on countless other rivers and streams in Maine has also taken place and will continue into the future and we hope the Commission will consider adjusting the quota for the
glass eel fishery annually and increasing access to all eel fishers in Maine waters in response to these activities.

Respectfully,

Darrell Young
President, Maine Elver Fishermen’s Association

Stock Enhancement Activity Summary

From 2012 to 2016 six major restoration and habitat enhancement activities were completed on the Lower Penobscot River and its major tributaries (the Stillwater and Piscataquis Rivers) as part of the Penobscot River Restoration Project. Collectively these projects directly reconnected over 1,000 river miles and nearly 75% of the area of the Penobscot River Watershed (Strategic Plan for the Restoration of Diadromous Fishes to the Penobscot River Maine resource agencies, March 2008) and are the result of major investments from State, Federal, and Tribal governments and nongovernmental organizations.

Summary of Major Activities of the Penobscot River Restoration Project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Passage Direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veazie Dam Removal</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>up/down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Works Dam Removal</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>up/down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howland Bypass</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>up/down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milford fish lift</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orono Dam eel passage</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>up/down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stillwater dam eel passage</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>up/down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These mainstem passage improvements reconnected a watershed drained by over 1,600 miles of river and streams, and over 600 lakes with 254,600 acres of surface area (Strategic Plan for the Restoration of Diadromous Fishes to the Penobscot River Maine resource agencies, March 2008).

Supporting work throughout the watershed continues to reconnect smaller tributaries and sub-drainages and is guided and funded by State, Federal, and Tribal governments and nongovernmental organizations.
Penobscot River Restoration Project
Before and After Habitat Access

Existing Access for Sea-Run Fish
- Diminished use of upstream spawning habitat by salmon and eels
- Little or no commercial, recreational, or tribal subsistence fisheries

Little if any passage of shad, alewife, blueback herring, striped bass, sturgeon, smelt, and tuna, required passage of eels

Significantly Improved Access for Sea-Run Fish to Nearly 1,000 Miles
- Restored use of upstream spawning habitat for salmon, shad, alewife, blueback herring, and eels
- State of the art passage for salmon, alewife, shad, blueback herring, and eels
- Full restoration of historical habitat and access for salmon, shad, alewife, blueback herring, eel, striped bass, sturgeon, smelt, and tuna

Map by the Natural Resource Council of Maine: