



## Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

April 5, 2019

Cynthia Ferrio  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NMFS  
55 Great Republic Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear Ms. Ferrio:

The responds to Sarah Heil's letter regarding the application for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) requested by Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF).

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, I support the issuance of an Exempted Fishery Permit to the applicant, i.e., CFF. The CFF submitted a complete EFP application on February 27, 2019, to conduct fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. The requested EFP would authorize a participating vessel to temporarily possess undersize black sea bass while conducting tagging procedures and biological sampling at sea. The object of this research is to tag and release black sea bass to study movement patterns, habitat usage, and migratory cycles for up to the 2-year battery life of the telemetry tags. If this EFP is approved, scientists on board the participating vessel would sample and tag black sea bass, including fish below the minimum size over the course of four 3-day charter trips off the coasts of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, in April and August of both 2019 and 2020. Up to 92 additional fish will receive specialty telemetry tags that will record extra information such as temperature, depth, and geolocation. All non-target species would be returned to the water as quickly as possible, and no catch would be retained for sale. CFF personnel would accompany all trips and oversee these research activities.

Please call or write if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

CMM: mjs

cc: M. Luisi, W. Elliott, S. Heil