



## Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901  
Phone: 302-674-2331 | FAX: 302-674-5399 | [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)  
Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

April 16, 2019

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

Dear Ms. Vasta:

The responds to Sarah Heil's letter regarding the application for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) requested by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), in partnership with the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, The Main Coast Fishermen's Association, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and fishermen enrolled in various groundfish sectors.

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, I support the issuance of an Exempted Fishery Permit to the applicant, i.e., TNC, along with project partners. The CFF submitted a complete EFP application on February 15, 2019 to continue development of an electronic monitoring (EM) program for catch accounting in the groundfish fishery. The project is funded through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The proposed EFP is a renewal of an EFP issued for fishing years 2016 through 2018. Under this EFP, participating vessels are authorized to use EM systems in lieu of human monitors to meet their at-sea monitoring (ASM) requirements. Vessels would be assigned observer coverage at the fishing 2019 ASM coverage level of 31 percent. Participating vessels would be exempted from sector third-party monitoring requirements (§648.87(b)(1)(v)(B)) when selected for ASM coverage; minimum fish sizes for Northeast multispecies (§648.83(a)), for sampling prohibitions (§648.86(1)), for sampling purposes only.

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