



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 9, 2020

Claire Fitz-Gerald
Sustainable Fisheries Division
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, NMFS
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear Ms. Fitz-Gerald:

The responds to Mike Pentony's letter regarding the application for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) requested by the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance.

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, I support the issuance of an EFP to the applicant, i.e., Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance. If approved, this EFP would build on previous EFPs issued to the project partners in support of the audit-model electronic monitoring (EM) program for groundfish sectors. The first EFP was issued in fishing year 2017; participating vessels were required to use EM on 100 percent of sector trips and groundfish discards were calculated based on the video footage. Vessels were exempted from their sector's at-sea-monitoring (ASM) requirements. Thirteen vessels using a variety of gear types (e.g. hook, benthic longline, sink gillnet, bottom trawl) participated in the project and completed a total of 81 trips. The EFP was renewed in fishing year 2018. GARFO developed and implemented a protocol for verifying, or auditing, vessels' self-reported discards from the electronic vessel trip report (eVTR) against video footage. Vessels were also granted exemptions to fish in closed areas during certain times of the year. A total of 258 trips suitable for quota monitoring were completed during fishing 2018. In fishing year 2019, GARFO renewed the EFP again and reduced the targeted level of audit to 50 percent of trips based on a statistical analysis of EFP trips from fishing years 2017 and 2018. EVTRs were used to calculate discards for trips that were not selected for audit.

The project partners have submitted a renewal request for fishing year 2020. The proposed participant list includes 15 vessels, all of the which participated in the EFP in fishing year 2019. Together, these vessels are expected to take a total of 590 trips. The project partners expect that additional vessels may join the project during fishing year 2020.

Please call or write if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C Moore", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

CMM: mjs

cc: M. Luisi, W. Elliott, M. Pentony