



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

May 27, 2020

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

Dear Ms. Hansen:

The responds to Mike Pentony's letter regarding the application for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) requested by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC).

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, I support the issuance of an EFP to the applicant, i.e., NEFSC. The NEFSC submitted a complete application for an EFP on March 9, 2020, to conduct fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. NEFSC is requesting an exemption from Federal lobster regulations that would authorize five federally permitted commercial lobster vessels to participate in a ropeless lobster gear study in Lobster Conservation Management Area 3. NEFSC is requesting an exemption from gear marking requirements at 50 CFR 697.21(b)(2) to allow for the use of a single buoy marker on a trawl of more than three traps.

The purpose of this study is to test a prototype ropeless fishing system as a potential technique to prevent entanglements of protected species, primarily North Atlantic right whales.

Please call or write if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C Moore".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

CMM: mjs

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