



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | P. Weston Townsend, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

September 16, 2020

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

Dear Ms. Hansen:

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, I support the issuance of an EFP to the applicant, i.e., The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundations (CFRF). The CFRF submitted a complete application for an EFP to conduct a lobster and Jonah crab monitoring study that Federal regulations would otherwise restrict. The purpose of this study is to collect pre-construction data on the abundance, size, and distribution of lobster and Jonah crab in the South Ford wind farm lease area and adjacent waters.

The EFP would authorize the eight participating vessels (3 active and 5 back-up vessels) to deploy 4 standard and 6 ventless traps per 10-pot trawl. The project consists of two survey periods from August 2020 through November 2020 and May 2021 through November 2021. Each vessel would take three one-day trips during the survey periods; one day to set traps, one day for sampling and resetting and another day of additional sampling. Soak time between trips will be five days. CFRF staff will be on board for the sampling trips. All gear would be Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan compliant. Survey traps will be separate from each vessel's commercial lobster traps and will have unique identification markers. To reduce the potential risk to right whales, CFRF has agreed to report if line and/or trawls are missing, apply distinct gear marking colors to the research trawls, and use 1,700 lb. breaking strength buoy lines.

All catch during sampling trips would be retained temporarily to collect biological data and returned promptly to the ocean. No catch from the research traps would be landed for sale.

Please call or write if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Moore".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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