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State of Louisiana

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
OFFICE OF FISHERIES

ROBERT J. BARHAM
SECRETARY

RANDY PAUSINA
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Director, Southeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service
75 Virginia Beach Drive, Room 207
Miami, FL 33149

RE: Shrimp Harvester Observer Program

Dr. Ponwith:

This letter is being sent in regard to a presentation Dr. Liz Scott-Denton, with NMFS, gave at the March 15, Louisiana Shrimp Task Force meeting. Let me begin by saying how pleased I am to be able to work so closely with your staff; I feel this is very important as we move forward on future endeavors.

Following the presentation and discussion with our department biologists and based on a resolution passed by the shrimp task force, I would like to offer the following recommendations:

(1) We would like to see the catch-composition component be separated from the sea turtle interaction observation study. If the major reason for the study is sea turtle interactions that should be the focus. The catch-composition component causes much more burden on the fishing industry than is needed at this time and should be made into a separate study.

(2) We would like NMFS to work more closely with LDWF to provide a universe of potential skimmer vessels stratified in such a way to give a more meaningful evaluation. Merely using a list of licensed skimmer vessels will not provide a representative sample.

(3) We would ask that you consider implementing an alternate observer platform option as part of the sea turtle interaction observation program. I am committed to working with you where possible to assist in sample collection.

Again, I appreciate you consideration of these matters and look forward to working with your staff.

Sincerely,

Randall B. Pausina
Assistant Secretary

CC: Louisiana Shrimp Task Force