

Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association

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March 18, 2011

Mr. David Cupka, Chairman
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Re: Amendment 21

Dear Mr. Cupka,

At the March meeting of the SAFMC in St. Simons Island, GA, the Council approved a motion by Mr. George Geiger and seconded by Mr. Ben Hartig to terminate all work relating to the development and implementation of Catch Shares in the commercial Snapper/Grouper fishery of the South Atlantic. We salute Mr. Geiger and the Council for their diligence in examining Catch Shares as a management tool in this fishery and the Council's ultimate conclusion that such an option is not appropriate or warranted at this time.

Messrs. Geiger and Hartig have chaired or attended nearly every single scoping meeting under Council jurisdiction and know first-hand the near total opposition to Catch Shares in the Southeast. The public outcry against Catch Shares was equally manifest at the Council's March meeting.

Catch Shares are a business plan, not a fisheries management regimen, ultimately resulting in significant fleet reduction and job loss, both unacceptable outcomes, during one of the most tumultuous economic cycles in America's history. Catch Shares are wreaking havoc in the New England fishery and have spread with similar results into the Gulf of Mexico adversely affecting commercial, for-hire and recreational fishermen.

Again, we thank the Council for their recent action on Catch Shares, recognizing they may not be the best management tool for all geographical areas and all fisheries. We look forward to working with the Council on industry based initiatives more suitable to protecting the resource and at the same time preserving jobs and the socio-economic structure of our nation's fishing communities.

Sincerely,

Bill Kelly

Capt. Bill Kelly
Executive Director

C: Con. Walter Jones
Con. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA
Dr. Bob Shipp, GMFMC

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