I want to bring the councils attention to the very critical issues facing the fishermen regarding the proposed amendment to Summer Flounder.

Summer Flounder Amendment Issues

- The management system should be changed to federal quota when fishing in federal waters and the ability to land in whatever port is the safest and closest port the captain chooses. Getting the harvest to the market with the best quality should be paramount to the American consumers and this management council.

- Flexible landings should be implemented – it makes no sense to have to steam all over the ocean to land fish that are caught right in federal waters right off our home port.
  
  o **National Standard 4** – Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different States. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various United States fishermen, such allocations shall be (A) fair and equitable to all fishermen: (B) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (C) carried out in such a manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excess share of such privileges.

  o **National Standard 10** - Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, promote the safety of human life at sea.

- Review qualifying criteria for federal fluke licenses. NMFS has taken numerous permits for other fisheries in the EEZ based on council recommendation for criteria based on landing history. There has to be landing criteria established based on 20 years of landings to show long term dependence in the fishery.

- The control date should have been set when fluke went to be a quota managed species. The pie cannot be split any further with new participants into the fishery. A new control date was not necessary.

- Latent effort must be addressed before this amendment is finalized. In other fisheries, they are taking permits away left and right due to inadequate landings.

- Regulatory discards should be the biggest issue and concern. Participating in the ground fishery targeting yellowtail and winter flounder, fluke are caught and discarded due to no quota. Consideration should be given to this issue.

- Do not let state by state politics get in the way of managing a coast wide resource.
• Representatives from various states were chosen to be on the council because of their knowledge and expertise in the fisheries NOT their political associations. Now it seems that politics is the driving the bus.

Other major issues that I hope you can discuss:

**Squid Quota**

• Moving Squid quota distribution back to quarters instead of tri-semesters.
• I am not sure what science was used for this year’s squid quota but it was completely flawed.
• Faulty science
• Again, quota management in general creates unacceptable regulatory discards.

**Scup Fishery**

• We would like the Winter 2 period to start October 1 for obvious reasons.
• The fish are in federal waters October 1st and as of now we are subject to state by state quotas while fishing in federal waters.
• The regulatory discard levels are just unacceptable.
• Extend Winter 1 period to May 15th.

**Commercial Sea Bass Quota**

• So mismanaged that it is inconceivable
• The regulatory discards of Sea Bass in the Scup fishery are unacceptable
• I would propose to get away from the quota management because whoever is figuring the quota has no idea of the fish that are out there.
• The resource is being wasted.
• Make Sea Bass 10% bycatch in Scup fishery.
• Quota management in general in this fishery should be reviewed. It does not work. Ask anybody that spends any time fishing either commercial or recreational. Regulatory discards are off the chart.

**Research Set-aside Program**

• In the Winter Flounder fishery and Yellowtail Flounder fishery we catch Fluke. With a very low quota there is a huge regulatory discard problem.
• If reinstated, there should be 100% observer coverage.
• The awarded bids to be paid at time of auction.
• This program benefitted a lot of fishermen and eliminated tons of regulatory discards.
• Please consider the benefits of reinstating the Research Set-aside program again.
Thank you for consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

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