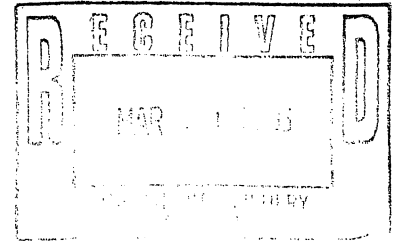




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
NORTHEAST REGION  
One Blackburn Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

FEB 27 2006



Daniel Furlong, Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
Room 2115 Federal Building  
300 S. New Street  
Dover, DE 19904

Dear Dan:

This letter is to advise you that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service), in response to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled "Individual Fishing Quotas: Management Costs Varied and Were Not Recovered As Required" (GAO-05-241/March 2005), has committed to work with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council on adding individual transferable quota (ITQ) program cost recovery to the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan (FMP) as currently required in section 304(d)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

In order to fulfill this commitment, I would like to establish an ITQ Cost Recovery Committee to develop a program to recover costs in the surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries comprised, in part, by representative stakeholders. To facilitate the development of this Committee, I would like to request that you please appoint well-qualified individuals to serve on this Committee. This Committee may also serve to develop a cost recovery program for the golden tilefish fishery, should the Council adopt an individual fishing quota amendment to that FMP. My staff lead for the development of the cost recovery program will be Brian Hooker who may be reached at 978-281-9220.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul  
Regional Administrator

