



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

February 23, 2023

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
RE: Environmental and Fisheries Research to Support Responsible Offshore Wind Development Program
Opportunity Notice (PON) 5226

Dear Project Selection Committee:

Please accept this letter from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) in support of the Rutgers University, Running Tide Inc, and Surfside Seafood Products LLC proposal to NYSERDA entitled, "Juvenile Surfclam Survival and Growth to Support Enhancement of Sustainable Fisheries."

The Council is one of eight regional councils authorized under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and tasked with conservation and management of our nation's Federal fisheries. The Council has management jurisdiction over 14 marine fisheries in Federal waters of the Mid-Atlantic region (including Atlantic surfclam), plus more than 50 ecosystem component species managed across all fishery management plans. The Council develops fishery management plans to achieve its vision of "Healthy marine ecosystems and thriving, sustainable fisheries and fishing communities that provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation."

We agree with NYSERDA that a path towards coexistence of sustainable fisheries and offshore wind will require scientific research products that enhance our understanding of the ecological and biological processes affecting our fish populations while also identifying innovative approaches that create opportunities for our fisheries to continue to thrive into the future alongside ongoing wind development.

This proposal seeks to answer a foundational question as to whether Atlantic surfclam hatchery stock could be used to enhance fishing opportunities outside offshore wind farms, by examining the growth and survival of hatchery reared surfclams that are placed and monitored in federal waters. While some research on the survival of hatchery reared surfclam has been conducted in coastal bays, this project would fill an important data gap by examining surfclam growth and survival in the offshore environment. It's a very important question to address relative to the feasibility of hatchery stock enhancement for surfclam fisheries offshore.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: J. Coakley, M. Luisi, W. Townsend