



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

December 10, 2021

Mr. Michael Luisi, Chairman
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street
Suite 201
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Mike:

As you know, the status of Atlantic mackerel did not change as a result of a management track assessment finalized in June 2021. Consistent with section 304(e)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), Atlantic mackerel remains overfished and subject to overfishing.

The June 2021 management track assessment incorporated updated commercial and recreational catch data and research survey indices of abundance through 2019, including a range-wide egg index to assess stock status. This assessment compared updated estimates of biomass and fishing mortality to existing status determination criteria originally implemented in Framework Adjustment 13 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan in 2019 based on the results of the 64th Northeast Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee process completed in 2018. At its July 2021 meeting, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee concurred with the results of the June 2021 management track assessment and the updated status listed above.

Based on the results of the 2021 management track assessment, we agree with the Council's decision to proactively modify the current Atlantic mackerel rebuilding plan implemented in October 2019. At its August 2021 meeting, the Council requested that NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service take emergency or interim action to reduce potential mackerel overfishing while it develops a rebuilding plan for this species during the 2022 fishing year. As you know, in October we used our in-season authority under the mackerel regulations to reduce the possession limit to 5,000 lb per trip for the remainder of the 2021 fishing year. We are also exploring options under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to address the Council's request for the 2022 fishing year, with the expectation that the Council action currently under development would be implemented beginning with the 2023 fishing year.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Carly Bari in the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9150.

Sincerely,

Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator



Cc: Dr. Christopher Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Dr. Jon Hare, Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Jenni Wallace, Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries