Mary Maxwell: My name is Mary Maxwell, and I've been a marine life fisherman for – fisherwoman – for 35 years. I have a marine life dive license, and my business name's Sea Critters, Inc., and I'm secretary of the Florida Marine Life Association.

Now, I realize that you all are concerned about the responsibility that you have to manage the fishery and the overharvesting, but I would like to say that the councils should go with a no-change decision on the amendment.

I realize that also you're concerned about, well, most of the gorgonias are collected in state waters. But you don't really need to regulate that because the state's already regulated it simply by the licenses that are out there. There's only about 130 – I mean there might be a couple less – but really close to 130 marine life dive licenses. We can only collect so much.

Now, if you stay with the 50,000 in federal waters, then no change is being happening, but if you add the state in there, then that's real close to the maximum that we've already collected, meaning that there's going to be no increase in demand. And it's not like there's gonna be any phenomenal increase in demand, but I don't think we should be financially penalized because – there might be a little bit – because there's billions and billions of gorgonias out there. There is no danger at all that they could be overharvested by these 130 people.

We're not out there even diving every day. There are so many days that you can't dive. And when you are out there, you're not diving all day long. You've got your tank. You come along. You put your anchor down, and you're collecting other things because this is the kind of fishery that is for the aquarium trade, and they don't want just gorgonias. The people want crabs. They want shrimp. They want fishes.

You've got your tank on. You go down. They only want certain sizes of gorgonias of certain colored ones, so you go in and you're on an area, and you're collecting all these little crabs and fishes and everything else, and you are getting certain size, the order that you have, of gorgonias. If somebody were to come along after you, they wouldn't even know you'd been there. There's still all these other gorgonias that you didn't need for your order and weren't the right size even if you did need 'em.

There's no need to be worried about the state waters aspect because of only having this amount of licenses. Anyway, I'm

asking, because it's just not necessary to change it, that you don't. Thank you.

Ben Hartig: Thanks, Mary. Alan Maxwell.

[End of Audio]