



# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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## **POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF ESSENTIAL FISH HABITATS INSHORE, SHELF AND DEEPWATER ARTIFICIAL REEF SITING AND CONSTRUCTION**

**(Outline Draft April 2013)**

### **Policy Context**

This document highlights the importance of artificial reefs and reef programs to state partners, regional resources and fishermen and establishes the policies of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) regarding protection of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Essential Fish Habitat - Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs) from threats associated with improper artificial reef siting and construction or activities that impact existing or proposed state reefs or reefs designated as Special Management Zones in Federal waters. The policies are designed to be consistent with the overall habitat protection policies of the SAFMC as formulated and adopted in the Habitat Plan (SAFMC 1998a), the Comprehensive EFH Amendment (SAFMC 1998b) and the various Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) of the Council.

The findings presented below assess the threats to EFH potentially posed by activities related to artificial reef siting and construction in offshore and coastal waters and the processes whereby those resources are placed at risk. The policies established in this document are designed to avoid, minimize, and offset damage caused by these activities, in accordance with the general habitat policies of the SAFMC as mandated by law. To address any future energy projects in the South Atlantic region, the SAFMC reserves the right to revise this policy when more information becomes available.

### **EFH At Risk from Improper Artificial Reef Siting and Development**

The SAFMC finds:

That

### **SAFMC Policies for**

The SAFMC establishes the following general policies related to, to clarify and augment the general policies already adopted in the Habitat Plan and Comprehensive Habitat Amendment (SAFMC, 1998a; SAFMC, 1998b):

### **References**

SAFMC. 1998a. Final Habitat Plan for the South Atlantic region: Essential Fish Habitat requirements for fishery management plans of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 1 Southpark Cir., Ste 306, Charleston, SC 29407-4699. 457 pp. plus appendices.

SAFMC. 1998b. Final Comprehensive Amendment Addressing Essential Fish Habitat in Fishery Management Plans of the South Atlantic Region. Including a Final Environmental Impact Statement /Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, Regulatory Impact Review, and Social Impact Assessment/Fishery Impact Statement. South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 1 Southpark Cir., Ste 306, Charleston, SC 29407-4699. 136pp.