



## Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Joseph Cimino, Chair | Skip Feller, Vice Chair  
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405

September 2, 2025

Dear John,

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (SAFMC) request to form a joint Council subcommittee to discuss the allocation of blueline tilefish between the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) discussed this letter during their August 2025 Council meeting and supported the establishment of a joint subcommittee.

The MAFMC agreed the subcommittee should include representation from each Council's appropriate species Committee, as well as one member from each Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Pending the availability of resources, we propose to convene the subcommittee later this year. Given the recent increase in blueline tilefish landings in the Mid-Atlantic, the MAFMC proposes taking administrative lead for this subcommittee. MAFMC staff will work closely with SAFMC staff to coordinate meeting logistics and materials.

While the MAFMC is committed to continued coordination with the SAFMC on blueline tilefish management, the MAFMC will proceed with the 2026 specifications approved at their June 2025 meeting. These specifications were developed through a mutually agreed-upon process, supported by the joint SSC recommendation, and reflect the best scientific information available. Moving forward with these specifications will ensure timely submission of the final package to NMFS and is necessary to facilitate timely and effective management for the upcoming fishing year.

Earlier this year, both Councils approved terms of reference specifically tasking this joint SSC subgroup with developing an apportionment of the acceptable biological catch (ABC) to support region-specific ABCs. Although this task was within the SSCs' role of providing scientific advice, the MAFMC recognizes that the resulting recommendation deviated from the previous allocation. As future allocation discussions proceed, it will be important to balance the best scientific information available with consideration of the social and economic impacts on fishermen, particularly given the data-poor nature of this species and fishery. These discussions should also account for the substantial differences in management frameworks between the two jurisdictions.

MAFMC staff will follow up with SAFMC staff in the coming weeks to discuss next steps. We look forward to continuing our collaboration in the shared management of blueline tilefish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Moore".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
Executive Director

CC: J. Cimino, S. Feller, H. Hart