



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Dr. Michelle Duval, Chair | Charlie Phillips, Vice Chair
Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

DRAFT

December x, 2016

The Right Honorable Perry G. Christie, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister
Sir Cecil Wallace Whitfield Centre
P.O. Box CB 10980
Nassau, N.P., The Bahamas

Dear Prime Minister Christie:

On behalf of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, I would like to express our gratitude to you for your assurance stated in the House of Assembly that the “Proposed China-Bahamas Agriculture and Fisheries Initiative” is not before the government for consideration, and that if it was before the government, it would not be approved.

The Council has received input from many concerned fishermen about the impacts such a project would have on their recreational fishing both in the Bahamas and in the Council’s management area. The Council is responsible for a number of species that would be impacted from such a project:

1. **Dolphin Wahoo** – the Council manages dolphin and wahoo from the Florida Keys through Maine. Dolphins migrate from south to north and move through the area between Florida and the Bahamas. High catches in this area, and other areas of the Bahamas, would reduce the numbers of dolphin available further north.
2. **Snapper Grouper Species** – the Council manages snapper grouper species from the Florida Keys through North Carolina. Any recruitment from the Bahamas would be negatively affected by a large increase in harvest in the Bahamas.
3. **Spiny Lobster** – the Council manages spiny lobster from the Florida Keys through North Carolina; the bulk of the fishery occurs in Florida, and the Council manages the fishery cooperatively with the State of Florida. Any recruitment from the Bahamas would be negatively affected by a large increase in harvest in the Bahamas.

In addition to the above species, tunas, billfishes, and sharks are very important to our recreational and commercial fishermen. Any large increase in catches in the Bahamas would negatively impact catches of these species by fishermen along the east coast of the U.S.

We recognize that the Bahamas has the right to harvest fishery resources within Bahamian waters, and we are not commenting on the level of harvest by Bahamian fishermen or recreational fishermen visiting the Bahamas. Our concerns are specifically related to the large increased catches that would result from a project such as outlined in the China-Bahamas Initiative.

Thank you for your continued support to not approve such an initiative, and if you have any questions or need any additional information, please have your staff contact Gregg Waugh.

Best regards,

Michelle Duval
Council Chair

cc: Council Members & Staff
Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director
Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA GC
Bonnie Ponwith, Director, NMFS/SEFSC
The Honorable Frederick A. Mitchell, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
The Honorable V. Alfred Gray
Minister of Agriculture, Marine Resources and Local Government