From:	Otha Easley (NOAA Federal)
To:	Mike Collins
Cc:	Bob Mahood
Subject:	SED investigations into reporting issues
Date:	Friday, December 07, 2012 9:08:54 AM

Mike,
Can you please distribute this to the Council members?
Thank you

http://search.tallahassee.com/sp?skin=100&aff=1118&keywords=&catId=0001

"An apology from Mark Easterling My name is Mark Easterling. I am a Tallahassee commercial fisherman and seafood wholesaler. On November 19, 2012, I pleaded guilty in Federal District Court in Tallahassee, Florida, to a misdemeanor count of making false statements to the U.S. government. The charge arose from my false reporting to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") the quantity of harvested fish I had obtained. I sincerely apologize for submitting false reports to NOAA and accept full responsibility for my actions. The different species of fish commercial fishermen harvest are subject to quotas set by NOAA. The quotas are set annually to ensure that the protected species are maintained in healthy populations. The quotas also level the competitive field for all fishermen to harvest the different species of fish. It is clear to me, as it should be to all involved in the fishing industry, that accurate reporting is not only good for our business, it is required by law, and failure to comply fully can result in prosecution. I have instituted compliance control measures to prevent any such misreporting in the future. The guilty plea stemmed from an investigation by NOAA and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission ("FFWCC"). NOVEMBER 27 and 28, 2012"

U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of Florida
99 N.E. 4 Street,
Miami, FL 33132
(305) 961-9001

November 20, 2012

NEWS RELEASE:

Jupiter Commercial Fisherman Charged for Making False Statements to NOAA

Wifredo A. Ferrer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Otha Easley, Acting Special Agent in Charge, NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement, Southeast Division (NOAA), Major Jeff Hubert, Regional Commander, South A Region, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), announced that Jason Cardinale, 41, of Jupiter, FL, was indicted for making false statements to the NOAA, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001. Cardinale made his initial appearance in federal court this morning in West Palm Beach. A trial date has not yet been set.

According to the 12-count indictment, from January 2010 through February 2012, Cardinale submitted false reports to NOAA regarding his company's fishing activity. More specifically, Cardinale submitted false No Fishing Activity Reports to the NOAA, potentially compromising the management of fisheries under NOAA's jurisdiction.

U.S. Attorney Wifredo A. Ferrer stated, "The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to helping our law enforcement partners enforce the laws aimed at protecting our fragile ecosystem, including our fisheries."

"Falsely reporting data leaves fishery scientists with an incomplete picture of what is truly happening on the water, which can ultimately lead the entire industry to shorter seasons and weaker fish populations," said Dr. Bonnie Ponwith, Director for NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center. "We applaud those who understand the integral role they play in an effective fishery management process by taking the time to supply high-quality, timely data."

If convicted on the charges in the indictment, Cardinale faces a possible term of imprisonment of up to five years, to be followed by a term of supervised release of up to three years on each count.

Mr. Ferrer commended the investigative efforts of NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and FWC. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Norman O. Hemming, III.

An indictment is only an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov.