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26 February 2010

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

Dear Chairman Harris:

The South Carolina Marine Association is supporting legislation that has passed our State Senate and is now in the House of Representatives (S.1095 and H.4497) to oppose "any areas closed to fishing off the coast of South Carolina associated with the SAFMC's proposed amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region."

We are asking the SAFMC to please postpone action on Amendment 17A until an up-to-date stock assessment of that fishery in our region is produced.

At a time when the boating industry is already suffering, the closure of bottom fishing off our coast will add another burden on the recreational and commercial fishermen with the economic consequences adversely impacting boat manufacturers, marinas, boatyards, boat dealers and other ancillary support businesses such as bait and tackle shops, as well as the tourism industry. This also would translate into more job losses.

Coastal tourism has a total economic impact in our state of over $7 billion and employs nearly 81,000 people. Saltwater fishing, in 2006, had a total economic impact of over $1 billion, employing nearly 12,000 people.

SCMA asks you to please not jeopardize this part of our state's economy without further study.

Sincerely,

Suzi DuRant
Executive Director
Cc:
David Cupka
Robert Boyles
Tom Swatzel

The South Carolina Marine Association is a trade association representing individual boaters and the marine industry in South Carolina.