



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Managing Fishery Resources in the U.S. Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico

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September 13, 2022

007063SEP2022

Mr. Andrew Strelcheck
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33710

Dear Mr. Strelcheck:

As you aware, the Council reviewed a request for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) as part of a project from Texas Sea Grant at its August 2022 meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas. This project is part of a collaborative effort with Louisiana Sea Grant and NOAA Fisheries. The project proposes to test new bycatch reduction devices (BRD) on commercial shrimp vessels in the Gulf of Mexico, and a total of six experimental BRDs are described in the proposal. One of the primary goals is to restore finfish populations injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill by developing and certifying new BRDs for the Gulf commercial shrimp industry, and a potential outcome of the new BRD designs and reduced bycatch is an overall increase in shrimp catch. The aforementioned goal aligns with one of the Council's Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Objectives – to “minimize the incidental capture of finfish by shrimpers, as appropriate.” Therefore, the Council expressed its support of the EFP proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale A. Diaz". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mr. Dale Diaz
Council Chair

cc: Gulf Council
Council Staff
Jack McGovern, Ph.D.
Frank Helies
Peter Hood
Clay Porph, Ph.D.
John Walter, Ph.D.
Laura Picariello