



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERIES OFFICE
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

SEP 13 2017

Michael Luisi, Chair
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
800 North State Street, Suite 201,
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Mike:

I am pleased to inform you that on September 13, 2017, we approved Amendment 6 to the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce. As you know, Amendment 6 establishes the Council's management regime for the blueline tilefish fishery in the Mid-Atlantic.

We published a Notice of Availability on June 14, 2017 (82 FR 27223), and a proposed rule to implement Amendment 6 on June 28, 2017 (82 FR 29263). We received 42 comments between the two solicitations. Comments focused on the recreational measures and the majority objected to the different bag limits by vessel type and the closed season. Although several concerns were raised, we did not identify a specific legal basis that would require disapproval of any of the provisions in Amendment 6. We will notify you when the final rule to implement Amendment 6 is scheduled to publish in the *Federal Register*. We appreciate the Council's ongoing efforts to responsibly manage this fishery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John K. Bullard".

John K. Bullard
Regional Administrator

cc: Dr. Christopher Moore

