



COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Christopher Moore, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council  
800 North State Street, Suite 201  
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Dr. Moore,

Thank you and the Council for the support provided to the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation as we pursue the development of automatic jigging as a new gear type for squid harvest in our region. The Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program project to pilot this gear, which was supported by the Council through additional funding and Mr. Didden's time, was successful in sparking interest within the fishing community. We have had numerous fishermen contact us in recent months with interest in trying the jigging machines on their own. The interest has been so great that we have submitted a proposal entitled "Fostering the development of automatic squid jigging" to the Partnership for Research Excellence in Sustainable Seafood. If funded, this project would create a free lending program in which Research Foundation staff would support fishermen by helping set up machines on their vessel and additional supplies to experiment with while fishermen would test the gear on their own in a semi-formalized way.

We also appreciated Mr. Didden's participation in a squid knowledge exchange hosted by the Research Foundation in early May. This exchange brought together members of the science and fishing communities from Maine, Japan, and Rhode Island to discuss squid jigging, management, and links to oceanographic features. A key participant was Mr. Keiichiro Hamano from HAMADE. HAMADE produces most squid jigging machines used in Japan and is exploring the potential to expand its market to the United States. As a direct result of our exchange, Mr. Hamano has offered to lend four jigging machines to the Research Foundation for one year. This fall we are expecting funding that will allow us to support limited trials with these machines on a Town Dock vessel under the oversight of a Japanese squid fishing master. This approach falls directly in line with the recommendations made by Council members when the results of our pilot jigging study were presented to the Council in January.

As we push forward on the research side of developing automatic jigging for squid, exploring the potential for a jigging exemption to the longfin squid trimester caps may be a way for management to complement this effort. This could incentivize the continued exploration of jigging by the fishing industry and would work in synergy with the lending program we are trying to develop. If levels of catch ever reached an amount that would impact the overall catch limit, it would be a marker of success and the exemption could be revisited.

On behalf of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation,

N. David Bethoney  
Executive Director, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation