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Lori R. Turner

**Resolution Opposing Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery
Management Plan
Amendment 15 Section F Sub Section F2**

WHEREAS, Carteret County has a long heritage in commercial fishing, and commercial fishing is the second largest economic driver in Carteret County; and,

WHEREAS, due to overregulation of the commercial fishing industry, the economic viability and the ever-decreasing number of area watermen threatens this valuable economic engine in Carteret County and other coastal counties along the Eastern Seaboard of the United States; and,

WHEREAS, Carteret County has been the home port for numerous pelagic longline vessels and has been one of North Carolina's most important seafood producing counties, directly providing employment for hundreds of our citizens and providing fresh, wild-caught product to seafood markets, restaurants and consumers across the country; and,

WHEREAS, pelagic long line vessels in the Atlantic are an important source of sustainably managed domestic seafood for the USA, providing yellowfin tuna, big eye tuna, swordfish, and mahi-mahi to American seafood consumers; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) adopted the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, NOAA adopted Amendment 7, adding the Electronic Monitoring Camera System on all pelagic longline vessels, and this system was installed and maintained by funding from NOAA; and,

WHEREAS, on May 7, 2019, Procedure 04-115-02, "Cost Allocation in Electronic Monitoring Programs for Federally Managed Fisheries," was implemented and electronic monitoring continued to be funded by NOAA; and,

WHEREAS, in May 2023, NOAA released the Draft Amendment of the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan; and,

WHEREAS, in Draft Amendment 15, Alternatives Section F, "Electronic Monitoring Program," Subsection F2, would transfer all costs of the Electronic Monitoring Program from NOAA to the fishing industry, and vessel owners would be financially responsible for all aspects of electronic monitoring, including the equipment, services, sampling and data storage of footage in which only 10% of a set would be viewed, creating an untenable and devastating financial burden on the fishermen; and,

WHEREAS, Draft Amendment 15 establishes a cost for any and all sets at \$280.00 each, resulting in an estimated \$1,700.00 additional cost per trip on average; and,

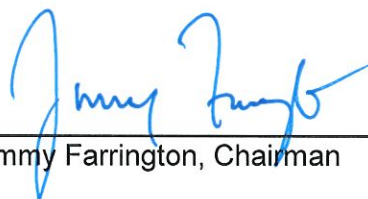
WHEREAS, it appears that in Amendment 15, NOAA mandates that all of the costs associated with data collection would be borne by the fishermen collecting the data rather than by NOAA, the agency that desires, needs and requires the information in order to manage the fishery; and,

WHEREAS, since 2015, the number of North Atlantic pelagic longliners has fallen from approximately 135 to less than 80 vessels, the resultant overall cost to NOAA for the electronic monitoring program is significantly lower than before, and it would therefore appear that the purpose and effect of Amendment 15 is purely punitive rather than an economic necessity; and,

WHEREAS, on August 9, 2023, NOAA released the National Seafood Strategy report, which outlines NOAA's direction over the next five years for supporting a thriving domestic U.S. seafood economy and enhancing the resilience of the seafood sector in the face of climate change and other stressors; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Carteret County Board of Commissioners strongly opposes Draft Amendment 15 Section F subsection F2 as this would add an overwhelming and unsustainable financial burden on our already overregulated commercial watermen and seafood industry in Carteret County and North Carolina specifically and on the pelagic longline fishing industry of the East Coast of the United States in general.

This the 16th day of October 2023.



Jimmy Farrington, Chairman

ATTEST:



Lori Turner, County Clerk

