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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

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TEL 843/571-4366 FAX 843/769-4520
Toll Free 1-866-SAFMC-10

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**MARINE RESOURCES
COMMISSION**

Email: safmc@safmc.net

Web page: www.safmc.net

George Geiger, Chairman
Duane Harris, Vice Chairman

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director
Gregg T. Waugh, Deputy Executive Director

July 27, 2007

Mr. Steven G. Bowman, Commissioner
Virginia Marine Resources Commission
2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
Newport News, Virginia 23607

Dear Mr. Bowman:

On behalf of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), I am gratefully extending our appreciation to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for establishing commercial and recreational limits on the harvest and landing of tilefish and grouper off the coast of Virginia. The Council commends the Commission for swiftly responding to increased catches of these species in recent years, thus supporting our efforts to maintain the long-term sustainability of the snapper grouper resource.

As conveyed in our January 4th letter to Jack Travelstead, members of our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel originally presented information documenting increasing catches of bluesnapper and snowy grouper off Virginia. The Council believes these species may be expanding their ranges northward, which may partly explain the growing fishery off your state. As such, we feel that future coordination between management agencies, including the states and regional fishery management councils, will be crucial to the successful management of these and other species. We will be adding two voting seats to the Council's Snapper Grouper Committee for members of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council so that they may fully participate in the development of future management regulations for this important fishery.

We are confident that the regulations implemented by Virginia will be instrumental in the conservation of these long-lived, slow-growing snapper grouper complex species along the entire Atlantic Coast. We look forward to future collaboration between Virginia and the Council.

Sincerely,

George Geiger

George Geiger
Chairman

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cc: Council Members and Staff
Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
MAFMC
Jack Travelstead
Joe Grist
Monica Smit-Brunello
Tom Jamir