

February 6, 2020



Dr. Christopher M. Moore, Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
cmoore@mafmc.org

Re: Illex Permits Amendment

Dear Dr. Moore:

On behalf of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA), I am writing to encourage the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council to approve the public hearing document for the Illex Permitting Amendment at its meeting on February 12.

The Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) is a national, grassroots political action organization established to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine and tackle jobs and the ensure the long-term sustainability of our nation's saltwater fisheries. The RFA believes that reducing the number of permits in the Illex fishery is necessary and appropriate at this time in order to slow the race to fish in the fishery, which has the potential to increase conflicts in the offshore waters between trawl fishing and recreational anglers who are pursuing offshore pelagic species such as marlin, tuna, and swordfish.

Specifically, we encourage the council to eliminate all latent permits without fishing history and use the 2013 control date, reaffirmed by the Council in 2018 with the intent to reduce speculative entry into the fishery, which is already occurring as the squid has become more plentiful again. The past several years have seen the Illex resource expand its traditional range but this will change again and we will see a retraction like we have in past years where most of the squid will be concentrated in one or two canyons. The existence of latent permits holds the potential for drastic increases in effort as well as creating spatial conflicts between sectors. Furthermore, an increase in fishing pressure by Illex boats has the potential to create localized disruptions to Illex which is one of the key forage species for offshore species targeted by recreational anglers.

As the Illex fishery has ramped up to catch the quota during the last three years, additional vessels are working the edge of the shelf where recreational anglers focus their fishing activities. We have a history of a good working relationship with fishermen that have operated in the fishery for many years and are concerned that any number of additional vessels may continue to access the fishery this summer and into the future and increase gear conflicts on the offshore grounds.

RECREATIONAL FISHING ALLIANCE
PO Box 3080
New Gretna, NJ 08224
Tel: 888 564-6732 Fax: (609) 294-3812
www.JOINRFA.org

We look forward to working with the Council through the public hearing process on the Illex Permitting Amendment and appreciate your attention to our encouraging the Council to pursue the amendment so that it may be in place for the coming fishing season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Donofrio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" being particularly prominent.

Jim Donofrio
Executive Director
P.O. Box 3080
New Gretna, NJ 08224

RECREATIONAL FISHING ALLIANCE
PO Box 3080
New Gretna, NJ 08224
Tel: 888 564-6732 Fax: (609) 294-3812
www.JOINRFA.org