

May 29, 2012



Samuel D. Rauch  
Acting Assistant Administrator of Fisheries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Springs, MD 20910



Dear Sam:

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Re-authorization Act of 2006 states that *"Each Council shall, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, develop, in conjunction with the scientific and statistical committee, multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes, that shall: (A) establish priorities for 5-year periods; (B) be updated as necessary; and (C) be submitted to the Secretary and the regional science centers of the National Marine Fisheries Service for their consideration in developing research priorities and budgets for the region of the Council."* Each Regional Fishery Management Council (RFMC) had developed its five year research priorities since 2008 complying with the provisions of the Act.



The Council Coordination Committee (CCC) requests the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) clarify and provide the RFMCs with information regarding the process in which the five year research priorities are considered by their respective NMFS Science Centers when developing their research priorities and budgets. Each Science Center develops their Science Plan that guides their research and justifies their annual budget request. Typically, the Councils were not consulted in the planning process, resulting in missed opportunities rendering science products not useful for management. The Councils are the principal client for the Science Center products and services. These science providers should seek inputs on how to best address their information needs in order to best serve this clientele. The process of incorporating the Council's five year research priorities in the Science Plans is unclear or even lacking. Guidance from NMFS is needed to ensure transparency, enhance collaboration between Science Centers and the Councils to, and maximizes the utility of the scientific information and efficient use of the limited funding available.



Further, the CCC requests the NMFS provide guidance on how the research priorities should be monitored. The Science Centers and the RFMCs should jointly monitor the steps in the process, from research to management, in order to determine if the priorities have been adequately addressed. The transition of scientific information into effective management strategies is an ideal goal for fisheries management. The feedback mechanism between the provider and the client should be established in order to close the loop and assure that the priorities are efficiently and effectively addressed.



MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



Thank you and we look forward to your response and action on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manuel P. Duenas".

Manuel P. Duenas  
Chairman



Fishery Management Council



## Region Fishery Management Council Chairs & Executive Directors



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Manuel Duenas, Chair  
Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director

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