



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

May 4, 2007

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FISH AND WILDLIFE

MAY 10 2007

Dr. William Hogarth, Director
National Marine Fisheries Service
1305 East West Highway
Silver Springs, MD 20910

OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Dr. Hogarth:

The National Marine Fisheries Service is considering a request for an exempted fishing permit, which if granted would allow 13 commercial vessels to fish in Atlantic waters off Florida. The permit would allow fishing of swordfish and other migratory species with longline gear, which is currently prohibited in a large area of federal waters off the coast of Florida.

The stated purpose of this request is to evaluate how modifications to longline gear may reduce unwanted incidental catch in these fisheries. Current fishing restrictions in Atlantic waters off Florida contribute to the recovery of depleted stocks of swordfish and other migratory species. Therefore, I withhold any support for Service action that could significantly increase fishing impacts and reverse the gains achieved in our recreational swordfish and other migratory species populations. We should explore other ways to study how longline gear and fishing techniques can be improved to reduce unwanted incidental catch without risking the recovery of these resources by reopening protected areas to commercial harvest.

I, therefore, respectfully ask you to deny this permit request and uphold existing policies that help swordfish and other migratory species continue to flourish.

Sincerely,

Charlie Crist

CC/kh

cc: Rodney Barreto, FWC Chairman
Ken Haddad, FWC Executive Director

*Please Deny
this!*